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Lawson urges Lamont to raise taxes by £6bn

Modest tax increases expected in today's Budget could be just a taste of tougher measures to come. Swingeing rises could be in the pipeline for next year

By Philip Webster and Anatole Kaletsky

LORD Lawson last night urged Norman Lamont to raise taxes by £6 billion in today's Budget to cut the massive public sector deficit, adding that it would be a serious mistake if he did not.

The former Chancellor's intervention came as there were growing signs that Mr Lamont's speech could contain politically explosive details of swingeing tax increases — but not until next year. He is expected to limit the coming year's rises to £2 billion for fear of damaging the economic recovery.

Lord Lawson has been joined by other senior Conservatives, including Lord Howe, in pressing Mr Lamont to raise taxes by up to £10 billion to reduce public borrowing. But the Chancellor was believed to have rejected that

increase in national insurance contributions, which would raise the effective rate of income tax on all but the lowest paid from next year. There could also be a firm commitment to extend value-added tax to zero-rated items such as food, children's clothes, reading materials and public transport. The Chancellor is further likely to announce the phasing out of mortgage tax relief and use the extra revenue to extend the 20 per cent income tax band.

Mr Lamont's speech, which could last more than an hour and a half, is expected to include radical measures designed to boost his own and the government's fortunes. There will be a package to help the long-term unemployed and encourage small businesses. He is also likely to boost the construction industry by announcing a series of projects, including the high-speed Channel tunnel rail link, that could qualify for joint financing by the public and private sectors under new Treasury guidelines. An announcement on two possible routes could come tomorrow. Mr Lamont is also expected to refer to the £300 million plant by British Rail and BAA to build an express rail service from central London to Heathrow.

Conservative MPs, who regarded Lord Lawson's last-minute intervention as distinctly unhelpful, doubted last night whether the Chancellor would heed his one-time boss's advice on taxation and were concerned that Lord Lawson's remarks could lessen the impact on the markets of the more modest measures that have been widely predicted.

Margaret Thatcher's long-serving Chancellor had told a conference of City executives in Westminster: "Urgent action is badly needed to cut back on public spending", and while he was not in favour of increasing taxation, he added: "When it has to be done, it has to be done. If the Chancellor is to make significant early inroads into the budget deficit, he has no option but to increase tax substantially."

The deficit had reached worrying proportions and it would be wrong for Mr Lamont to wait until his next Budget in November. Lord Lawson compared the situation with 1981 when Sir Geoffrey Howe decided to

IF BUDGET COMES CAN GREEN SHOOT BE FAR BEHIND?

advice on the grounds that the recovery was too fragile and the government's position was too precarious to withstand the shock of much higher taxes.

It now appears, however, that Mr Lamont could spell out plans to increase taxes by as much as £7 or £8 billion a year from 1994. The unexpected strength of the economy, the apparent willingness of many Conservative backbenchers to stomach higher taxes and the positive reaction in America to President Clinton's budget plans are said to have impressed both the Chancellor and the prime minister. Between them, these factors may have swayed them to unveil a bolder Budget today than had earlier been planned.

Among other measures that could be announced is a big



Returning to the fray: Marmaduke Hussey and his wife, Lady Susan, arriving back in London from Hong Kong

Pressure grows for Hussey to resign

By Alexandra Frean, Media Correspondent

MARMADUKE Hussey, the chairman of the BBC, is under growing pressure to step down because of the turmoil caused by the tax status of John Birt, the director-general.

As Mr Hussey returned to London from Hong Kong yesterday, where he had been a guest of Chris Patten, the colony's governor, public support for Mr Birt continued to emerge. In a letter published in *The Times* today, Lady

Howe, the deputy chairwoman of the Equal Opportunities Commission, and a number of eminent public figures, expressed their support for Mr Birt, who has been criticised for tax avoidance on his salary.

A number of governors and BBC board members privately expressed their lack of confidence in Mr Hussey, however. One board member said: "An increasing number of people are suggesting that we could keep John Birt, and that it is the chairman who should go."

The National Union of Journalists, which has also written to *The Times* on behalf of "many" BBC journalists, called for both men to resign.

One governor said yesterday that much of the attention surrounding the disclosure that Mr Birt was paid through his own private company could have been avoided if the chairman had convened an emergency meeting of governors last week.

Another governor, Dr Owen Jones, repeated his demands for some "straight

answers" from Mr Hussey, who originally gave Mr Birt's tax arrangements his blessing.

Speculation was growing yesterday that the disclosures were made by a governor. One said: "The governors were informed about a month ago about Mr Birt's freelance contract. The press revelations came immediately after that. Maybe it is just a coincidence."

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Prince visits Bosnia troops

By Michael Evans, Defence Correspondent

THE Prince of Wales will fly to Bosnia today for a seven-hour visit to meet some of the 2,500 British troops involved in the United Nations humanitarian operation.

He will be flown by Royal Navy Sea King helicopter from Ark Royal, the aircraft carrier now in the Adriatic 60 miles off the coast of former Yugoslavia. The carrier, with two frigates and three support vessels, is a back-up for the troops.

The prince is the colonel-in-chief of the Cheshire Regiment. During his visit he will meet Lieutenant Colonel Bob Stewart, commander of the regiment. They will meet at Camp Redoubt, which was built by Royal Engineers on a mountain track halfway between Tomislavgrad in south-

west Bosnia and Vitez in central Bosnia.

The prince will initially be flown by helicopter from Italy to Ark Royal and then taken by a Sea King from 845 Naval Air Squadron to the British logistics base, Divulje barracks, near Split airport in Croatia. He will spend an hour there.

Up to 100 men from the Cheshires are expected to travel by Warrior infantry fighting vehicles from Vitez, the main British base, to Camp Redoubt to meet the prince after he is flown by helicopter from Split to the mountain site. He will not be going to Vitez.

After an hour with the Cheshires, the prince will be flown to Medovic, a town on the southern Croatian coast that is an aid distribution

centre for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). He will meet officials from the UNHCR and from the Overseas Development Administration before being flown back to Split.

Yesterday, Brigadier Andrew Cunningham, commander of the British forces in Bosnia and Croatia, who will escort the prince during the day, said the trip will be "a great boost to morale. The Cheshires are scheduled to be replaced in May by the Prince of Wales's Own Regiment of Yorkshire, now training in Germany for the Bosnian operation."

The prince will leave Split late this afternoon on an aircraft of the Royal Flight to return home.

Morillon meeting, page 15

Health authority names Bolton Aids doctor

By Ronald Falk

THE trainee GP who died after contracting Aids and worked shifts in casualty at the Bolton Royal Infirmary was named yesterday as Yasar Mudrik Almahawi, 33, from Saudi Arabia.

It was revealed that Almahawi trained at Queen's University, Belfast, and had taken part in up to 100 operations during two years at the South Tyrone general hospital in Dungannon. He was transferred to a non-surgical unit when health officials became aware of his condition. He then moved to a Belfast hospital before his appointment in Bolton as a trainee GP. Wirim Bhatiani, a partner in the practice, said that it was only after

Almahawi had accepted the job that he revealed he was HIV positive. Advice confirmed that there would be no risk to patients. "The practice was not aware at any time that the doctor was involved in sexual work at the hospital. I do not know why he went to work in casualty... there is no doubt that he should have exercised better judgment."

Bolton health authority, which named the man, and the family health services authority said their concern had been for the patients and everything had been done to provide counselling.

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Thomas Stamford, page 17

China threatens 'treacherous' Patten with retaliation

By Catherine Sampson in Peking

THE conflict between Britain and China over the future of Hong Kong blew up yesterday when Li Peng, the Chinese prime minister, openly accused Chris Patten of treachery and threatened reprisals over his plans for democracy in the colony.

The governor had "perfidiously and unilaterally" proposed important changes in Hong Kong's political system in breach of the agreement for handing the territory over to Chinese rule in 1997. Mr Li said, adding: "The British government shall be held exclusively responsible for all serious consequences arising from its action."

Mr Li did not indicate what those consequences might be, but his remarks at the opening of the National People's Congress sent the Hong Kong stock market plunging by 315 points, wiping out a month of gains. There has been speculation that Peking will set up a shadow Hong Kong government, weakening the British administration.

Mr Patten declined to comment on the Chinese leader's speech, but in London, Douglas Hurd told the Commons that Britain remained ready for talks at any time. Britain has been pressing since October for negotiations on broadening democracy in Hong Kong, but China has been prevaricating. On Friday, an exasperated Mr Patten published his proposals for extending the franchise for the 1995 elections so that most of Hong Kong's legislative council will be democratically elected; since then, the Chinese attacks have intensified.

These culminated in yesterday's unprecedented direct assault on Mr Patten, which was cheered loudly by the 3,000 delegates at the Peking congress. Mr Li said that China's resumption of sov-

erignty over Hong Kong was a sacred right, "which shall not be interfered with or sabotaged in any way", but Mr Patten's proposals were "designed to impede the smooth transfer of power". The official Xinhua news agency also joined the barrage of criticism, reporting that Hong Kong deputies to the Chinese parliament were also angry about the governor's attitude.

In the Commons, Mr Hurd said that even in the past week he had been reasonably hopeful that procedural obstacles to "talks about talks" with China could be overcome, but Britain would not accept the sugges-



Hurd: says Britain will talk at any time

tion that the role of representatives from the Hong Kong government in the discussions should be downgraded. The foreign secretary said that Mr Patten's proposals represented the right way forward, "but we have said from the start that we are open to alternative ideas from the people of Hong Kong or from the Chinese side". China had simply opposed the proposals without offering an alternative.

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MATTHEW PARRIS
POLITICAL SKETCH

Come on girls, make 'em squirm

When John Knox first described "the monstrous regiment of women," he must have seen a vision of yesterday at Westminster. It was all-party women's day. Celebrations included all-female synchronised whingeing, a girl's boxing match and a "throw a wet sponge at the minister in the Lord Chancellor's department" (women only) stall.

We knew we were in for a punch-up when social security minister Ann Widdecombe strode up in flower-printed navy and white cotton, looking like a militant duvet. Lumbering up she knocked a couple of Labour men for six, hurrying lists of figures at them and rasping that they should be ashamed of themselves.

Madam smiled indulgently. But Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman and Lady Olga Maitland shouted "No!" These two women oppose the idea of female priests. It must be said that they provide a powerful argument against it.

Barracking from the dame continued. Minutes later when Gwyneth Dunwoody (Lab, Crewe and Nantwich) and Teresa Gorman (C, Billerica) ambushed and beat up a defenceless, belding man answering for the Lord Chancellor. Their question concerned the paucity of female judges. Mrs Gorman (who tells MPs that rapists should "have their gollies cut off") knocked the minister down with statistics. Before he could get up he was flattened by La Dunwoody, a powerful blonde with the delicacy of an Aeroflot air hostess. She told him that any woman who could deal with male criminals. Both ladies wanted more female judges.

Advised that, in time, more women would be appointed, Mrs Dunwoody, breathing heavily, cried: "It's always like that here. The men all tell you that if you wait long enough, something will happen." A number of small, bald, male MPs giggled nervously.

But Miss W was just warming up. Next she was joined by Mrs Marion Roe (C, Broxbourne), for a scrap. Betty Boothroyd, Mrs Roe was to ask Miss Widdecombe: "How many pensioner households had a telephone in 1979; and in 1990?" Miss W would then tell Mrs R that under the Tories more old dears have telephones. Then Mrs R would ask Miss W whether this was equally true of central heating. And, before Miss B could rule them both out of order (the question was about telephones) Miss W would tell the chamber how good life was for the elderly now she was in charge.

But Madam Speaker would not be ganged up on like this. She stopped Miss Widdecombe in her tracks and told her to relate central heating to telephones or sit

down. "Well, they're both consumer durables," challenged the truculent Miss W. Madam felled her with a single blow: her microphone was switched off. Game, set and match to Miss Boothroyd.

A new women's team now entered the ring for questions to the "male" MP representing "the church commissioners."

A crawler (male) had asked about the costs of removing male priests who refused to work with female ones. Assured that this was manageable, he told Miss B he was proud to serve under the first woman Speaker and could not wait to bow the knee to the first woman bishop.

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Consultants say almost half of pits due to close could still be economic

British Coal 'ignored criteria to close pit'

By Ross TIERMAN
AND JILL SHERMAN

ONE of the ten pits closed last October by British Coal, Grimethorpe colliery, was economically viable and did not meet the corporation's criteria for closure, according to a consultant's study for the Department of Industry.

Markham Main pit had the potential to become viable and Taff Merthyr was closed with premature haste, according to the report by consultants John T Boyd.

The American consultants have indicated that between seven and 14

of the 31 pits scheduled for closure by British Coal, with the loss of 30,000 jobs, could be economic.

British Coal said "full consideration" would be given to Boyd's conclusions. However, it insisted that any attempt to save pits on the closure list would lead only to others being shut because demand for coal from the electricity generators had fallen.

Downing Street sources yesterday made clear that decisions about the future of individual mines would be taken by British Coal. Officials also pointed out that British Coal had advised the Department of Trade and Industry that the two pits which

the report suggested could have a future were not viable.

Mr Heselgrave commissioned Boyd to examine the ten pits after a High Court ruling in favour of the National Union of Mineworkers and the Union of Democratic Mineworkers said the review procedure used by British Coal had been inadequate.

In an earlier study of the 21 pits earmarked for closure but still operating, Boyd concluded that "between six and 13 pits have potential to be economically viable".

The latest report concluded that the Grimethorpe pit near Barnsley, South Yorkshire, could make an

operating profit provided that new coal preparation facilities were installed and performance at the coal faces improved by 20 per cent in the next three years.

In addition, the Markham Main colliery, near Doncaster, South Yorkshire, could be viable if laws restricting the length of miners' shifts were changed and new mining techniques adopted, the consultants said. Malcolm Edwards, the former commercial director of British Coal, has signalled his faith in the future of Markham Main by asking to be allowed to take it over.

The consultants also criticised Brit-

ish Coal for prematurely closing Taff Merthyr colliery in South Wales. "A settlement should be negotiated between British Coal and the mineworkers based on their net loss of earnings," the consultants said.

Ken Hancock, Grimethorpe NUM branch secretary, said: "The pit has been profitable for the past three years." The NUM believes work could resume on the pit's Parkgate seam within seven days and the Fenton seam within two to three weeks. But machinery needed to open new faces has been removed from the mine and only 60 face workers are still available.

HIV puts doctors at greater risk than patients

By JEREMY LAURANCE, HEALTH SERVICES CORRESPONDENT

MEDICAL staff are at much greater risk of contracting HIV from a patient than patients are of contracting it from a doctor. There have been 148 cases world-wide in which health workers are known or presumed to have contracted HIV from patients, but no confirmed case in which a patient has been infected.

Doubts have been cast on the only case — that of a Florida dentist — in which patients are alleged to have been infected. A paper in *Nature* last month suggested that the five patients with HIV may have been infected in other ways.

Demands for screening of medical staff have increased following cases of HIV infected doctors in Kent, Mid Glamorgan and Bolton and a dentist in London which have come to light in the past week. Health experts said that screening for HIV all staff who perform operations or other invasive procedures would cost up to £50 million a year to eliminate a negligible risk.

MPs have backed the call for screening, saying the public has a right to protection. But the health department said it remained opposed to compulsory testing.

The health department has summoned leaders of doctors, dentists and nurses to a meeting with Dr Kenneth Calman,

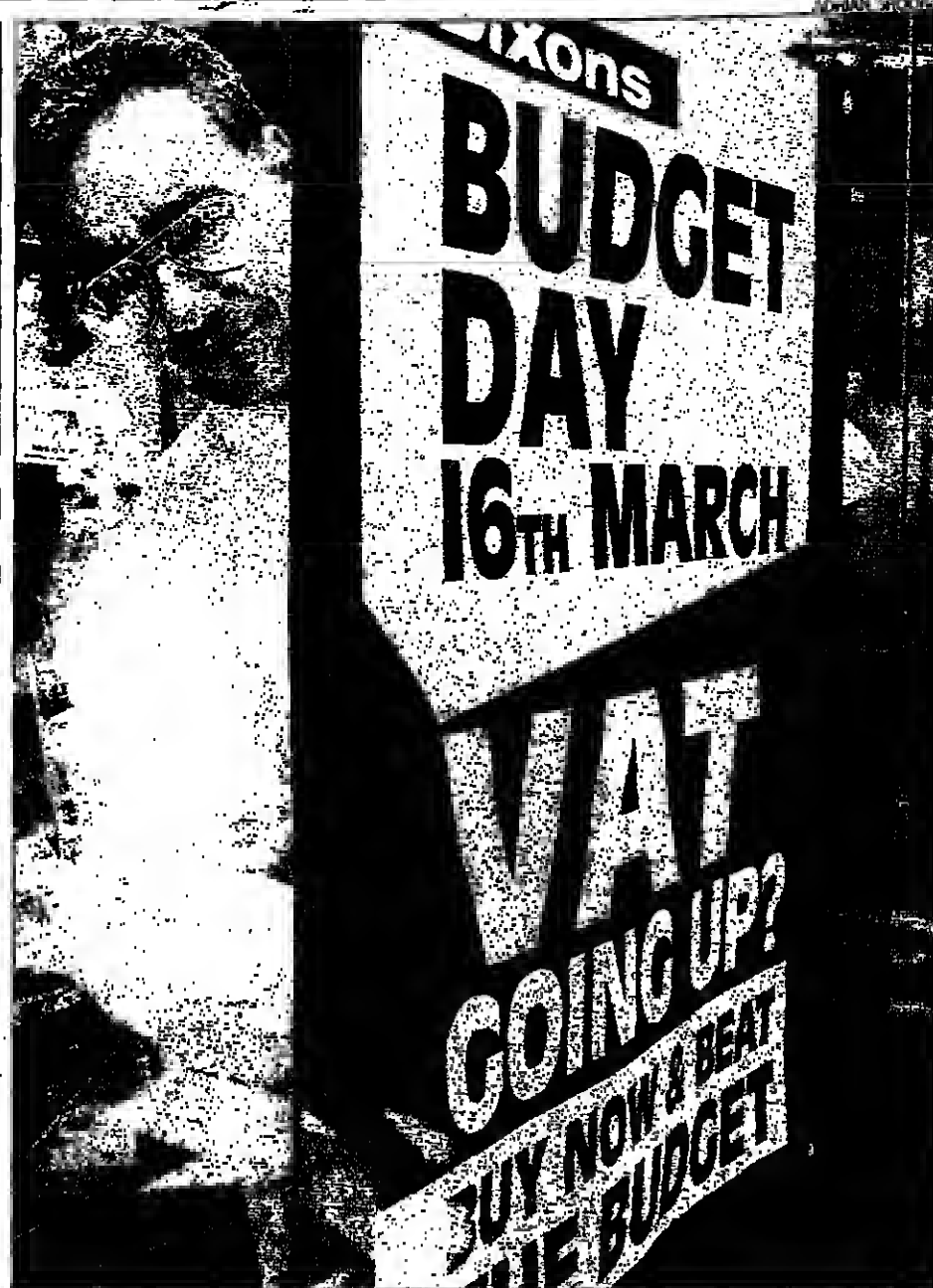
the chief medical officer, to discuss strengthening guidelines for staff which require them to disclose whether they have HIV or think they may be at risk.

If introduced, testing would have to be repeated at least every three months and would have to include dentists, GPs and midwives as well as surgeons, obstetricians and gynaecologists, said Professor Michael Adler, head of the department of genitourinary medicine at the Middlesex hospital, London, and a former member of the government's advisory committee on Aids.

Surgeons would be likely to demand testing for all patients awaiting surgery, to protect themselves. Professor Adler said: "I can understand the public reaction but you have to look at the science. There has been no confirmed case in the world of a doctor infecting a patient with HIV."

The thousands of former patients besieging telephone helplines in Bolton, Mid Glamorgan and Kent are casualties of the propaganda war against Aids. Warnings that the disease represents the greatest threat to human health this century have created a panic that has left the public confused about the real risks.

GP names, page 1



Budget sounding: an electrical store at Richmond, west London, yesterday

Kidney sale doctor back at work

ONE of three doctors disciplined for the sale by Turkish peasants of kidneys for transplants was yesterday granted permission to resume private practice.

Michael Bewick, 56, of Sydenham, south London, was barred from undertaking private kidney transplants three years ago after a 35-day hearing of the General Medical Council's professional conduct committee, the longest in its history.

He was found guilty of serious professional misconduct over the removal of kidneys from four illiterate Turks at the Wellington Humana hospital in St John's Wood, north London, between June and November 1988.

The same committee took only a few minutes yesterday to decide to remove the restriction. It took into account Mr Bewick's "quite extraordinary contribution" to kidney transplantation. He can resume private practice from May 7.

Mr Bewick's solicitor, Ralph Shipway, said that since the case he had been carrying out transplants for the national health service, working under supervision, at hospitals in London and Brighton.

At the original hearing, Raymond Crockett, who helped organise the sale of the kidneys from the four Turks, was ordered to be struck off. The third doctor, Michael Joyce, was ordered to confine his professional practice to his own speciality of urological surgery.

Thatcher enlists monetarist

By SHEILA GUNN
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

ONE OF the so-called seven wise men who has been advising Norman Lamont, Tim Congdon, has been called in by Baroness Thatcher on the eve of the Budget to help her vindicate the monetarist strategy she pursued as prime minister. She also wants to counter criticism made by her former Chancellor, Lord Lawson.

As she finalises her memoirs, due to be published this autumn, Professor Congdon has been employed to strengthen her denunciation of Lord Lawson's decision to shelve the mark.

The former prime minister's decision to use the services of the arch-monetarist Dr Congdon indicates Lady Thatcher's determination to continue her campaign against the European exchange-rate mechanism.

The memoirs are expected to answer in detail the complaints made by Lord Lawson in his autobiography *The View from Number 11* and to explain why, against her better judgment, Lady Thatcher allowed herself to be talked into joining the ERM.

Dr Congdon is no stranger to controversy. He fell out last week with colleagues on the panel appointed to supply the Treasury with a range of independent economic forecasts when he cast doubt on their intellectual competence. Never afraid of disagreeing with fellow economists, he alone of the seven argued for a £12 billion tax increase to be announced in today's Budget to reduce the rising public sector borrowing requirement.

In an open letter Dr Congdon, an adviser at Gerrard & National, the City discount house, and a professor at Cardiff business school, accused the other panelists of being grossly incompetent in failing to take adequate account of money balances.

Although reluctant to disclose details of his role in the Thatcher memoirs, Dr Congdon told *The Times* that he knew "what went wrong" during Lord Lawson's chancellorship, although he was not involved in policymaking at the time.

Lawson in call for big tax increase

Continued from page 1

increase taxation by almost 2 per cent of gross domestic product, representing some £12 billion in today's terms.

Mr Lamont should, he said, increase taxes by 1 per cent of GDP, not by increasing basic or the higher rate of tax or corporation tax, but "by carrying forward the tax reforms of the 1980s". To defer decisions until later this year, as some had advocated, would be "politically foolish, and counter-productive". If Mr Lamont took the difficult steps now, his Budget could prove the turning point in the government's fortunes.

Lord Lawson's prescription was swiftly deplored by senior Tory MPs. Sir Geoffrey Johnson-Smith, a member of the 1922 committee executive, said: "I cannot think of a worse suggestion. It will add to people's burdens and depress their hopes just at a time when there are hopes for believing we are over the worst of the recession." Another Tory MP simply remarked: "What a nerve."

Labour meanwhile made a final plea to Mr Lamont to cut the number of jobs lost and help industry. Gordon Brown, the shadow chancellor, said any other Budget would be a betrayal of Britain.

He then set out Labour's plans, including industrial modernisation, measures to improve employment, help for construction through the phased release of councils' capital receipts, and new incentives for manufacturers.

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REPORTING

A report (January 8) wrongly suggested that the chief constable of South Yorkshire, Mr R. B. Wells, is in favour of the American side-handled baton as part of protection for police officers. Mr Wells does not support the use of the baton and will not do so until it has been subjected to rigorous trial.

Recording may help free trapped whales

Sound recordings of sperm whales may be played to a school of six such whales to lure them into deep water from the natural harbour of Scaev Flow in the Orkneys, where they appear to have been trapped for three weeks (Gillian Bowditch writes). Experts will meet in Orkney today to plan an escape route for the whales. John Good, a marine expert from North Wales, is expected to attend the meeting in the offices of Scottish Natural Heritage in Kirkwall with tapes of sperm whales recorded off the Azores. Dr Tony Martin, of the Sea Mammal Research Unit, Cambridge, will explore the possibility of luring the whales from the shallow waters of Scaev Flow, where they are liable to beach themselves, by playing the recordings to them.

Dr Martin said: "Sperm whales eat about a tonne of food a day. No one knows how long they can go without food and hopefully we will not find out on this occasion. The whales almost certainly do not want to be where they are. I think we could mount a successful rescue mission." He believes that luring the whales with recordings of their species may prove difficult but is willing to consider it. "We don't know what the whales were saying when the recordings were made. They may have been saying 'keep away', which could drive the whales towards the shore." It is the fourth time this century that sperm whales have been sighted off Orkney. Normally they would not come within 100 miles of the British coast.

Belfast man shot dead

A Roman Catholic man was shot dead by Loyalists in the Newtownabbey area of North Belfast yesterday. Police said that Robert Shaw, 56, of Larne, co. Antrim, was sitting in the driver's seat of a van at Quay Lane, on the shores of Belfast Lough, when a gunman approached and shot him twice in the chest. He died at the scene. A car thought to have been used by the gunman was later found abandoned on a nearby Loyalist estate. Mr Shaw was the 18th victim of the troubles this year.

Governor's son killed

A son of Robin Leigh-Pemberton, governor of the Bank of England, has died in a car crash in Zimbabwe. Thomas Leigh-Pemberton, 30, who ran a safari business in Harare, was killed in the early hours of Sunday morning when his car crashed into a barrier and a lamppost. His father, who is on a trip to Hong Kong, was told of his son's death yesterday.

Drug find at school

Six boys have been expelled from a public school in Oxford for possessing cannabis. Police said they would not be taking action against the boys from St Edward's School because the amount of drugs seized was said to be minute. Douglas Eader, the second world war flying ace, was one of the school's distinguished old boys.

Salmon to feed mink

Farmed salmon that were contaminated by the Braer tanker oilspill off the Shetlands in January are to be turned into silage and fed to mink. A Norwegian company is to collect up to 600,000 two-year-old fish. They will be killed humanely and turned into feed for the mink, which are reared for their fur and are not part of the food chain.

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Rugby player dies after match clash with rival

By JOHN GOODBODY, SPORTS NEWS CORRESPONDENT

A RUGBY Union forward who received severe head injuries on Saturday after a clash with a rival player in a junior club match at Hendon, north-west London, died yesterday in the Royal London Hospital.

Both the police and rugby officials said they would be investigating the death of Seamus Lavelle, 25, of Edgware, north London, who collapsed and stopped breathing following an incident with a player from the opposing club, Centaur.

A member of the Centaur team was released without charge on police bail on Sunday.

Mr Lavelle was flown by air ambulance to hospital on Saturday afternoon, but surgeons decided against emergency surgery and put the player on a life support machine. He was died in the intensive care unit with his wife, Josephine, at his bedside. A post-mortem examination will take place today.

Det Insp Michael Ander-

son, who is leading the investigation, said: "We are keeping an open mind about the whole incident. We will be interviewing everyone who was at the game, who may have seen what happened. That includes the teams, the officials and any spectators."

In the 170-year history of English rugby union, no player has been charged following a death of a rival on the pitch. All recorded deaths on the field in Rugby Union are believed to have been due to accidents, which have claimed the three lives in the past seven years.

The Middlesex merit table match, in which Centaur was leading 22-10, was abandoned after Mr Lavelle collapsed.

Dr Peter Bromley, who was in the air ambulance, described Mr Lavelle as "desperately unlucky", adding: "There was no apparent injury."

"It is possible he had a weakness or a congenital de-

fect, but we will have to wait for the post-mortem to find that out."

Dr Bromley said that when he arrived at Hendon, 40 minutes after the incident, Mr Lavelle had stopped breathing.

Robert Ham, a brain surgeon at the hospital in Whitechapel, east London, said: "There was severe swelling of the brain which could not be dealt with by surgery. The patient's treatment was all non-surgical."

"The swelling that showed up on the scan was severe, but it is not like a blood clot that can be removed to relieve pressure on the brain."

John Brown, Hendon's deputy president, said: "Seamus was a man's man, a gentle giant with a tremendous sense of humour."

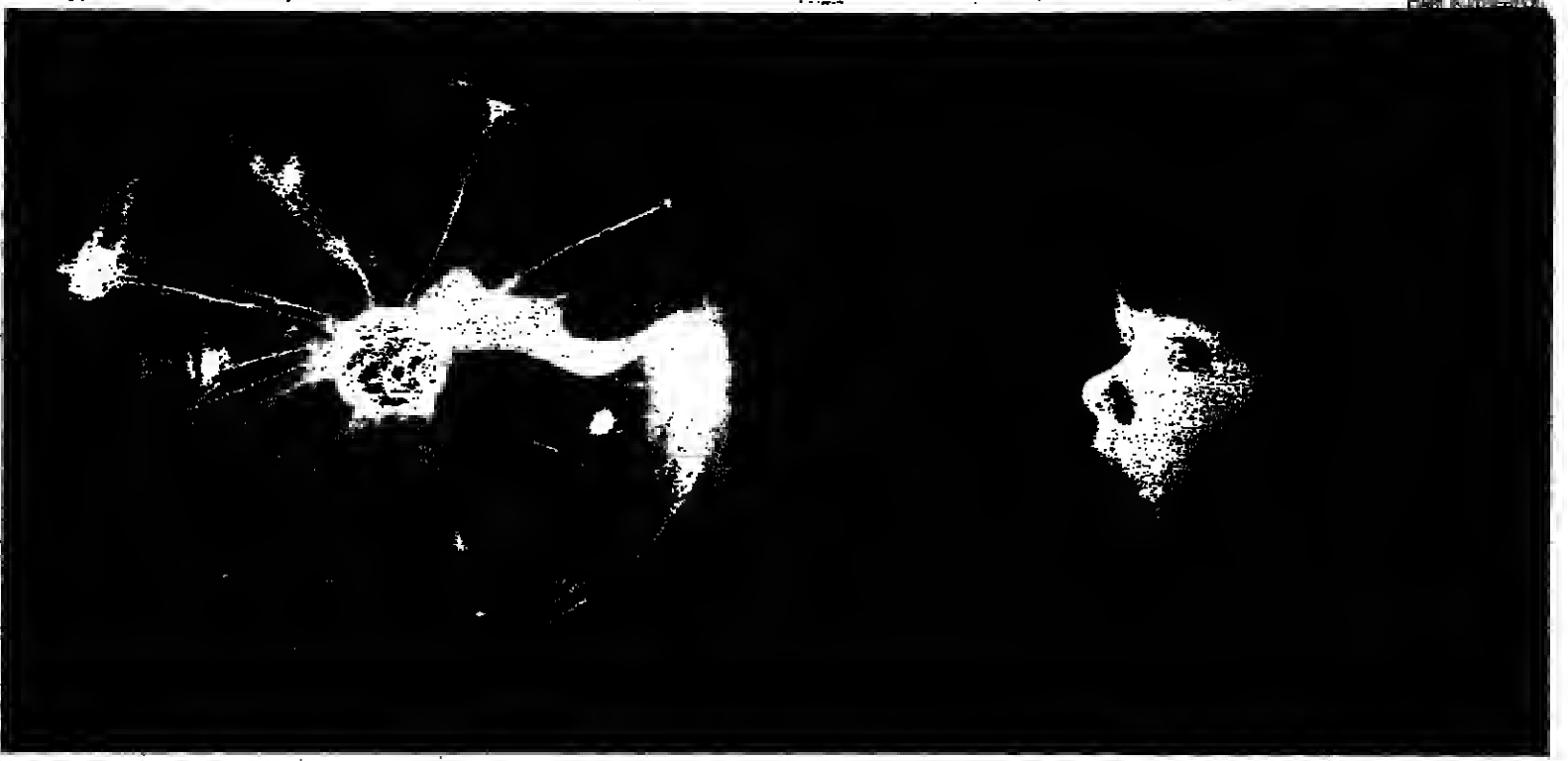
He had played for the Hendon Colts team until 1986, when he graduated to the first team.

Dudley Wood, secretary of the Rugby Football Union (RFU), said the governing body would be receiving a report from the referee. "The Middlesex County Union will decide what further steps to take after seeing the referee's report. Sadly, people die playing every sport. About 300,000 people in England play rugby regularly."

Over the past 15 years, the RFU has been examining the laws of the game to reduce dangerous incidents. In 1982, it amended the scrumming laws to avoid collapses. However, the previous weekend, another Hendon player was taken to hospital suffering from spinal injuries caused when a scrum collapsed.

The heaviest sentence believed to have been imposed on a Rugby Union player occurred in 1988 when Steven Lloyd of Dings Crusaders was jailed at Bristol for 18 months for causing "grievous" bodily harm to Steven Oakley of Bishopcleeve.

John Buckley, a Rotherham United footballer, was in a coma yesterday after fracturing his skull in a clash of heads with a defender during the second division game against Plymouth.



Touch of colour: two-year-old Kirsty Prisk, who is visually impaired, lights up an electric plasma sphere being used to help disabled children at Middlesbrough General Hospital to improve their hand-to-eye co-ordination. The sphere was spotted

at an agricultural show by Terry Sutcliffe, a planner with Cleveland County Council (Nigel Hawkes writes). Mr Sutcliffe's three-year-old son Philip attends a unit at the hospital where 60 under-fives handicapped by cerebral palsy and other

disabilities are treated. When touched, the football-sized device generates harmless electrical discharges in many colours which glow in spectacular fashion. Mr Sutcliffe approached Nuclear Electric, who agreed to donate a £450 sphere to

the hospital. Kate Morris, who runs the unit, said: "We would never have known it existed if he hadn't drawn it to our attention. It is a lovely and different way to encourage the children. They love it and are responding very well."

Old Bailey told gunman shot PC dead at point-blank range

By MICHAEL HORSNELL

A SPECIAL constable was shot dead and his colleague severely wounded by two gunmen, after the policemen stopped their car for a routine check, the Old Bailey was told yesterday. Later the two gunmen cornered two officers who pursued them and bullets from a Kalashnikov rifle "danced on the road" around their car.

Paul Magee, 42, unemployed, and Michael O'Brien, 28, from Belfast, deny the murder of special constable Glenn Goodman, the attempted murder of PC Alexander Kelly, PC Mark Whitehouse and PC Susan Larkin, and possessing a firearm.

John Nutting, for the prosecution, said that early on June 7 last year PC Goodman and PC Kelly stopped a red Ford Sierra car on the A64, near Tadcaster, North Yorkshire. The two occupants, who had Irish accents, gave false names and an unconvincing account of their movements.

PC Kelly was using his car radio when he saw the passenger door of the Sierra open. Mr Nutting said: "Magee got out. As he got out he adjusted his trousers and PC Kelly thought he was about to urinate. But instead Mr Magee turned and reached into the rear of the Sierra."

"Two yards from the special constable, Magee raised both arms together, holding them out in front of him in the combat position, and to his horror PC Kelly saw a handgun protruding from Magee's clenched fist. Magee fired twice at point-blank range into PC Goodman's chest."

Mr Magee allegedly then fired at PC Kelly. The officer was hit four times and a fifth bullet was found embedded in his radio handset.

Mr Nutting said the men drove off in the Sierra, reaching up to 100mph. They were spotted by PC Mark Whitehouse and PC Susan Larkin, who caught up with the car near the village of

Burton Salmon, where it stopped.

Mr O'Brien allegedly got out with a Kalashnikov sawn-off rifle and took aim at the police car. PC Whitehouse pushed his companion's head beneath the dashboard to save her and reversed the car at speed to get out of the way. But the officers were trapped when their car collided with a fence and the Sierra pursued them.

By then nine bullets had hit the Peugeot and PC Whitehouse feared for his life as the gunman advanced, the court was told. But a private car approached and the two men drove off.

Later the Sierra was abandoned by the two Irishmen, who made off into woods and lived rough for several days, Mr Nutting said. They were arrested separately in Pontefract, West Yorkshire, on June 11. Shopkeepers alerted police when the two men bought fresh clothing and acted suspiciously.

The case continues today.

SAS soldiers refuse to appear at inquest

By EDWARD GORMAN, IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

TEN SAS soldiers who were involved in the ambush of three IRA men in Co. Tyrone more than four years ago have refused to give evidence at their inquest, a coroner said yesterday.

John Leckey, the coroner at Enniskillen, Co. Fermanagh, told a jury on the opening day of the inquest into the deaths of Michael Gerard Harle, 29, his brother Martin, 23, and their brother-in-law Brian Mullin, 26, that only three members of the 13-strong SAS team would be cross-examined.

He said the soldiers who would appear had been granted a public interest immunity certificate, signed by Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Northern Ireland secretary, and would give evidence from behind screens to prevent their identification.

Mr Leckey added that only the statements to the police of those who had declined to appear could be submitted, a "less-than-perfect situation". The Harle brothers and

Brian Mullin, all from Six Mile Cross, Co. Tyrone, died trying to kill a former UDR soldier who had apparently stopped to mend a puncture on his lorry on a country road near Omagh in August, 1988.

However, Mr Leckey said, the security forces had been tipped off and when the IRA team arrived on the scene in a stolen car they were caught in a hail of bullets fired by soldiers hidden along the side of the road.

He said that the three dead men were found to be wearing boiler suits, boots and gloves and three weapons — two rifles and a handgun — were recovered from the car. One of the rifles had discharged 16 shots during the incident.

The coroner said that one of the soldiers who would be giving evidence was the leader of the Army unit, who had taken the place of the former UDR man and driven his lorry along the road to the point where the ambush occurred.

The inquest continues.

Irish race over for the crack

By RICHARD EVANS, RACING CORRESPONDENT

FATHER Sean Breen, parish priest of Templeogue, south of Dublin, yesterday set off on his annual pilgrimage to Cheltenham, where he will be joined this afternoon by tens of thousands of fellow devotees.

The tell-tale dog collar will be absent as he takes his place for the twenty-fifth time in the stands at Prestbury Park racetrack for the opening day of the National Hunt festival. For three days, the form book will take precedence over the Good Book, as jump racing fans enjoy what the Irish call "the crack".

Punters will wage about £60 million on the outcome of the 20 races at the festival, including £10 million on the Gold Cup.

Stories of gambling exploits will abound as the high rollers of the turf are drawn to Cheltenham like moths to a flame. In 1986, shortly before the Gold Cup, the Irish taoiseach and his finance minister reportedly held a crisis meeting to try to discover why Irish banks were suddenly running short of cash. According to Irish folklore, vast amounts were being withdrawn to bet on Dawn Run, the Irish-trained favourite. Fortunately for the Irish economy, the mare won.

Festival preview, page 41

Girl joyrider aged 14 killed in police chase

By IAN MURRAY

A GIRL aged 14 died at the wheel of a stolen high-performance car early yesterday in one of several car chases involving teenage joyriders and police.

In another incident, patrol cars chased a 15-year-old driver for three hours at speeds of up to 100mph before he turned into a cul de sac and was forced to stop.

In a third chase, cars from two police forces covered 70 miles in 45 minutes behind a car driven by one of six boys aged between 13 and 15. The chase ended when the car ran out of petrol.

The girl who died was trapped inside the stolen Rover Metro GTI after a two-mile 70 mph chase through Birmingham. The Metro, which accelerated after a police patrol car turned on its flashing blue light, hit a kerb, somersaulted, slid across a dual carriageway and struck a lamp post.

Two teenage boys who were in the car escaped injury. Last night two boys were helping police with enquiries into the incident and about another missing car.

Chief Supt Richard Chidley of West Midlands police traffic division said the two officers had complied fully with guidelines for following vehicles. "This tragic incident only underlines the dangers of young people illegally driving cars," he said.

The dead girl was Sally Ann Cattell, who had been living in care at a children's home at her family's request for the past month. The two boys with her, aged 16 and 17, also lived in the home.

The longest chase was in

southeast London, Kent and Surrey and began when police approached two 15-year-old boys in a stolen Vauxhall Astra at Sidcup, Kent. The car sped off on a 120-mile journey, frequently driving on the wrong side of the road, ignoring traffic lights and one-way restrictions and going the wrong way at roundabouts until it turned into a dead end and the boys tried to escape on foot.

The other chase was through Hampshire and Wiltshire and began when police noticed a stolen Vauxhall Astra in the centre of Southampton. They tried to stop it, but it made off towards Bournemouth, then north to Salisbury where Wiltshire police joined the 90mph chase.

The car circled the city and sped towards Warminster, but stopped at Heytesbury where it ran out of petrol. Four boys were arrested immediately and two others were arrested several hours later after the boys arrested were living at children's homes in Hampshire.



Sally Cattell: died at wheel of a stolen car

Freed rapist struck after eight days

By RICHARD FORD, HOME CORRESPONDENT

A SERIAL rapist who was released from prison only to rape again eight days later was yesterday jailed for 12 years after a court was told that since the age of 13 he had had urges to sexually assault women.

Peter Musgrove, 20, a former mechanic, was freed from prison on licence after two years of a five-and-a-half year youth custody sentence for rape, burglary and assault. He will serve the remainder of the original sentence before starting the new jail term.

Shortly before his release, Musgrove wrote in a diary that he was desperately trying to control his fantasies about rape and was bearing voices urging him to sharpen his knife and rape women.

His brother, Michael, of Dagenham, Essex, is also a serial rapist and is serving a 13-year prison term for three rapes and indecent assault.

Within days of leaving jail, Peter Musgrove was stalking a divorced mother, aged 32, whom he attacked as she left her deserted workplace at Thatcham, Berkshire. He produced a knife when she was struggling with him in a car. Richard Latham, QC, for the prosecution, told Reading Crown Court. He was arrested next day, picked out at an identity parade and charged to the rape by DNA profiling.

The court was told that in diaries that Musgrove kept in prison but which were not found until after his arrest, he wrote about fighting fantasies about rape and said: "It is like trying to give up smoking and it is bloody hard."

Music day will celebrate Britain's diversity

By ALISON ROBERTS, ARTS REPORTER

A COMBINATION of rock, Purcell and the Proms will mark the second national music day this summer.

The day, initiated last year by the rock singer Mick Jagger and Tim Renington, then arts minister, is modelled on the French national music holiday. Events will celebrate Britain's musical diversity, from a search for songwriters, led by Roger Daltrey, former lead singer of The

Who, to arias from Mozart's operas, at Barrington Court, Somerset.

The project was launched at the Hard Rock Café in London yesterday by Peter Brooke, the national heritage secretary, in conjunction with the pop group Right Said Fred and an assortment of music industry moguls. Mr Brooke admitted that he could not hum anything by Right Said Fred but said: "People tell me that Britain is a leader in pop music and I'm prepared to take their word for it."

Harvey Goldsmith, the music impres-

sario and chairman of the project's committee, said people should turn up their hi-fi sets and radios on music day — in fact the weekend of June 26-7.

The Arts Council, which is contributing £40,000, is planning a Purcell celebration with anthems being played in ten cathedrals. Anthony Everitt, the secretary general, said the council was moving its concentration from professional to amateur music. Fledgling pop stars playing in garages were as important as established performers, he said.

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Teachers who ban tests threatened with loss of pay

By JOHN O'LEARY, EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

LOCAL authority leaders yesterday tried to salvage this year's national curriculum tests as the threat of classroom disruption grew.

Some authorities are threatening to dock teachers' pay if they take part in the testing boycott called by the National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT). Others are reminding head teachers and governors of their legal responsibility to administer the tests.

The boycott officially began yesterday but few schools reported immediate disruption. Most NASUWT members were discussing the scope of their action before halting the assessment of pupils, the first target of the dispute.

Although other teachers' unions have refused to join the boycott, the National Association of Head Teachers has advised its members not to bring in extra staff to take over assessment and testing, and

the Secondary Heads Association has called an emergency conference on the boycott next week.

Although some assessment and preparation of pupils will be at risk this term, the only testing is taking place in primary schools, where NASUWT has relatively few members.

Some authorities have written to head teachers, warning them that they could face legal action if they do not ensure that the tests go ahead. In Devon, Ken Watson, the chairman of the education committee, has offered to collate evidence of any adverse effects on teachers or their schools for a submission to John Patten, the education secretary. But he has also told the county's head teachers that the authority proposed to reduce the pay of staff taking part in the boycott.

In Hertfordshire, the education authority wrote to heads last week, advising them that

they might be liable to legal action by parents or ministers if they did not allocate responsibilities for the tests.

The Campaign for Real Education, the right-wing pressure group, has offered to help parents who wish to pursue legal action against teachers involved in the boycott.

The teachers' main objection is that testing and assessment under the national curriculum has become so bureaucratic and time-consuming that staff cannot devote sufficient attention to normal teaching.

Teachers' dissatisfaction has focused on new tests for 14-year-olds in English and technology, although both the National Union of Teachers and the National Association of Head Teachers have also advised their members not to take part in the pilot tests at 11. Those for seven-year-olds are threatened by only the NASUWT.



Class action: primary schools are likely to escape test boycotts, which are focused on those for 14-year-olds

Primary schools 'to select pupils'

By BEN PRESTON
EDUCATION REPORTER

STATE primary schools are likely to start selecting able pupils to boost their position in national league tables based on compulsory test results for seven-year-olds, a report said yesterday.

Head teachers will face pressures to avoid enrolling children from poorer backgrounds, "summer babies" who are young for their age group, children with special educational needs and those speaking English as a second language, because they lag consistently in the tests, according to academics from Leeds University in a report commissioned by the National Union of Teachers.

Instead, schools will regard girls and children who have received nursery education as an "asset" as they perform better.

The report, which evaluated the national curriculum tests taken by more than 500,000 seven-year-olds last year, also highlighted the depth of teachers' discontent. Most said that the tests remained too time-consuming, limiting the attention teachers could give individuals, despite government efforts to slim them down.

This year's tests in mathematics, science, English and technology are already under way against the backdrop of a boycott threat by the second largest teachers' union. For the first time, the government will publish a league table in the autumn detailing the performance of more than 19,000 primary schools in England and Wales based on the results.

The Leeds team, headed by Dr Diane Shorrocks, said that league tables based on the raw results of the tests were "invalid and misleading" because of significant differences in the way certain groups of children performed. There was a danger schools would view such children as "liabilities" when deciding on admissions.

Researchers found that pupils from advantaged backgrounds were twice as likely to score above average marks in English than those from poorer areas. In mathematics, the difference was five times.

A similar pattern emerged with twice as many "winter-born" children, achieving higher marks across all subjects than pupils born in summer, who had consequently spent less time in school. Children who had been to nursery school outperformed those pupils who had not.

Literature prize goes to Naipaul

By ALISON ROBERTS
ARTS REPORTER

THE author V.S. Naipaul was last night awarded the first David Cohen British Literature Prize for a "lifetime achievement by a living British writer". He receives £30,000, the biggest such prize in Britain.

Sir Vidiadhar was born in Trinidad in 1932 but has been a British resident since 1950 and was knighted in 1990. His novels include *A House for Mr. Biswas*, *The Mimic Men*, *A Bend in the River* and *The Enigma of Arrival*.

He said last night: "I like the name of the prize. It is the British Literature Prize and I like that because this writing career of mine has been conducted here."

The prize, to be awarded every two years, was judged by a panel led by Michael Holroyd, chairman of the literature panel of the Arts Council. It is sponsored by the family charitable trust of David Cohen, a GP in London.

Prize speech, page 37

JUDITH HAS

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"I'm Judith, and I have epilepsy."

Despite all these conditions, and the 18-month delay, she qualified as quickly as her fellow students, and went on to obtain a degree, followed by the post-graduate Certificate in Education for teaching.

And all the time her epilepsy was no problem. It was controlled by medication, and Judith has had no seizures for several years.

Most people with epilepsy, whether seizure-free or not, lead uncomplicated lives of this kind, a fact worth remembering when one of them applies to you for a job.

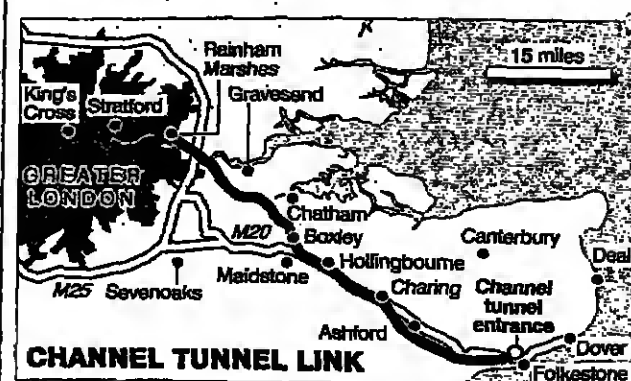
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It also tells you about the new disability symbol which lets disabled people know they have an equal chance of a job.

Not that Judith would regard herself as having any disability.

At the hospital she knows how to reassure children and parents when epilepsy is diagnosed.

"I understand," she says. "I'm Judith, and I have epilepsy."



King's Cross row delays rail route

By TIM JONES, TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

THE expected announcement today of the route for the rail link from the Channel tunnel to London is likely to intensify divisions between Sir Bob Reid, chairman of British Rail, and John MacGregor, the transport secretary.

Although the route will run largely as expected from Folkestone to Dartford, the government is to postpone a decision on the path it must take through the capital.

This is because of a dispute involving Sir Bob, John Pridoux, chairman of Union Railways, the man charged with delivering the link, and the Treasury.

Sir Bob and senior members of his management team are fighting a rearguard action to obtain government approval for their plan. This would turn King's Cross into a £1.4 billion super-terminal to handle high speed Channel traffic and would also play an important part in untangling rail transport in the capital.

John MacGregor, the transport secretary, is thought to favour a cheaper £700 million route for the link, running into the adjacent St Pancras station.

One well-placed source said yesterday: "There is a big battle being waged among the old guard on the BR board who are determined to fight

for King's Cross. They see it as a mark of faith in the future of the railways."

More pragmatically, Dr Pridoux is said to be aware of the Treasury constraints and has managed to cut costs from the original £4.5 billion estimate to about £2.5 billion.


The fear is that any protracted row over the London section could delay the high-speed link, destined to open by 2000, and might even threaten it.

Before London, the proposed route will take the link from Ashford to Dettling and Boxley before crossing the Thames between Dartford and Gravesend.

Although there is a small doubt over whether the government will make the announcement tomorrow, it is pledged to do so well before local government elections in May in order to avoid accusations of skulduggery.

British Rail spent millions of pounds buying property and planning a route through south London, only to have its proposals rejected by a unanimous vote at the Conservative conference in 1991.

Today's Budget is likely to give the go-ahead to the £300 million Heathrow to Paddington rail link, which will be financed mainly by the private sector.



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Former MP pays ex-wife 5p a year after three decades of marriage



Sir Eldon: big losses on Black Monday

FRANCES GIBB
LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

SIR Eldon Griffiths, the former MP for Bury St Edmunds who divorced his first wife against her will after 30 years of marriage, pays her five pence a year in maintenance, the High Court heard yesterday.

The nominal order was revealed at the start of a legal action brought by Sir Eldon's wife, Sigrid Griffiths, 63, who is claiming £74,000 in damages from the solicitors she blames for not obtaining her a better divorce deal.

Mrs Griffiths maintains that the London solicitors, Dawson & Co, were negligent and in breach of their duty in failing to win her a

proper financial settlement, including pension rights. She says the firm failed to make a crucial application to the court at the time of the divorce in 1985 which would have protected her financial position and any entitlement she might have to Sir Eldon's House of Commons pension.

Mrs Griffiths originally received £10,000 a year in maintenance. This was later reduced to £5,000, but since Sir Eldon's retirement from politics at last year's general election she has received a nominal 5p a year.

Her claim for £74,000 damages includes £32,000 for the cost of buying a pension policy and nearly £26,000 in wasted legal costs and interest. Dawson & Co deny negli-

gence or breach of duty and claim that Mrs Griffiths has suffered no loss as a result of the work they did for her.

She married Sir Eldon, 67, in June 1949. They separated in June 1979. He was MP for Bury St Edmunds for 28 years.

James Davis, counsel for Mrs Griffiths, told Mr Justice Ewbank that in June 1985 Sir Eldon was granted a decree absolute without her consent on the grounds that the marriage had irretrievably broken down because they had lived apart for more than five years.

Mrs Griffiths could have had a divorce in 1979 because of her husband's adultery. "But while he was pressing her for a divorce she was reluctant to have a divorce and

was telling him she still loved him and wanted him to stay with her," he said.

Sir Eldon later married his second wife Betty, but following some bad business investments his financial position had changed for the worse.

Mrs Griffiths believes that since his remarriage, Sir Eldon has lost £52,500 on a business venture which failed, spent £96,500 renovating a derelict cottage to make a new family home and paid £11,000 for a swimming pool.

Mr Davis said that if the solicitors had made the necessary application in 1985 under section 10 of the Matrimonial Causes Act 1973, asking the court to consider her financial position after the divorce,

provision for Mrs Griffiths would have been based on Sir Eldon's financial circumstances before remarriage.

But the court application was not heard until 1990, by which time "Sir Eldon's financial position had totally collapsed", Mr Davis said.

Before the Black Monday stock market collapse in 1987, it would have been possible for Sir Eldon to have bought an annuity to replace the MP's widow's pension which she would have been entitled to eventually. By 1990, he did not have the capital to buy an annuity. The judge commented: "So instead of a pension she gets 5p a year."

Valerie Kleanthous, spokesman for the Solicitors' Family Law Association, said she could not

comment on the particular case, but complaints about solicitors following divorce were extremely common, making up 18 per cent of complaints to the Solicitors' Complaints Bureau.

"People very often blame the solicitors, particularly their ex-spouse's solicitors. They argue that their former wife or husband could be behind what is being requested, so it must be the solicitors."

On nominal maintenance orders, she said these were quite often deliberate, as a way of keeping the wife's options open so that if circumstances changed, she could go back to court and seek an increased maintenance order.

The hearing, expected to last two days, continues.

Scientists link rogue gene to breast and ovary cancers

BY NIGEL HAWKES
SCIENCE EDITOR

A GENETIC defect is responsible for breast and ovarian cancer in families with a history of the diseases, British scientists have shown.

The same defect, arising spontaneously, may also cause other cases of the two diseases, according to Dr Doug Easton of the Institute of Cancer Research in Sutton, Surrey. He believes that the normal function of the gene is to control growth processes. When it is defective it allows tumours to develop and grow in an uncontrolled fashion.

In those who have the defective gene, the lifetime risk of getting breast or ovarian cancer, or both, is about 80 per cent. The gene has yet to be identified but when that is achieved, screening may enable women at risk to take precautions.

Scientists from the Sutton laboratory, supported by the Cancer Research Campaign, and from the Imperial Cancer Research Fund's genetics laboratory in Leeds publish their findings today in the *American Journal of Human Genetics*. Dr Tim Bishop, from the

■ A discovery in British research labs could provide better screening for women most at risk from cancer

Leeds laboratory, said: "We looked at dozens of case studies, from as far apart as America, Holland, Iceland, Germany, France, Sweden and the UK... and we were amazed to see that all of the families seemed to have the same genetic defect."

In the families studied, at least two women had had breast or ovarian cancer. Dr Easton said: "We are hopeful that the gene will be identified within a year or so. It may then be possible to determine which women in these families have the defective gene."

Professor Bruce Ponder, of the CRC Human Cancer Genetics Group in Cambridge and chairman of the committee that co-ordinated the study, said: "This is another piece in the jigsaw which will help us understand the biology of two cancers which affect tens of thousands of women in this country and claim the lives of 20,000 every year."

Those carrying the gene,

which tends to cause cancer at younger ages, may be encouraged to have regular breast examinations and to start them much younger. The national screening programme covers women aged 50 to 65. Dr Easton suggests that women carrying the gene ought to be screened regularly from the age of 35.

A more radical approach would be the surgical removal of breasts and ovaries in women found to be at risk, even where no signs of cancer had appeared. Some women from families where these cancers are common have already opted for this treatment, though it is commoner in America than in Britain.

No preventive drug has been proved effective, although cancer specialists believe that tamoxifen, used to treat breast cancer, may also prevent it. A large trial is planned to demonstrate this.

Body and Mind, page 17



The one that they want? Tina Francis, a 21-year-old clerk from Nottingham, was among hopefuls auditioning in London for the lead female role in a West End adaptation of *Grease*. The first stage version to use songs from the film opens at the Dominion Theatre in July. The successful applicant for the Olivia Newton-John role will play opposite Craig McLachlan in the John Travolta part

Charities struggle to keep pace with demands for aid

BY JAMIE DETTMER

CHARITIES are struggling to keep spending in line with their incomes, according to a financial survey published yesterday.

The combined assets of the top 1,000 charities is about £20 billion, the equivalent of Britain's defence budget and a third of the country's social security budget, but increased demand on charitable trusts is forcing some foundations to put their future at risk by digging deep into their reserves.

Eight charities, including the Aldeburgh Foundation, a music charity, and the London Zoological Society, are battling to survive.

The *Henderson Top 1,000 Charities* guide, produced by Hemmington Scott, shows that charities were forced to use 97 per cent of their income from assets in 1992 compared with 95 per cent in the previous year.

Peter Scott, the guide's chief compiler, said: "Although a few charities are well-endowed, most are struggling to keep pace with growing demands on their resources. The typical charity's latest accounts show expenditure rising by 14 per cent and income by only 10 per cent. This trend can't go on forever."

Mr Scott said the amount of public donations had remained about the same in the past two years and administrative costs had not risen significantly. The increased expenditure could be put down solely to the huge jump in requests for help.

Some charity experts claimed yesterday that Britain's trusts and foundations were being forced to act as an alternative welfare state, a result of a decade of government cuts in social security and health provision.

"There is no doubt that demand on all trusts is growing remarkably," said John

Wheeler, financial director of the Rank Foundation, a charity that specialises in supporting youth projects. Last year, Rank outspent its £6.03 million income by nearly £250,000. The charity received more than 2,000 unsolicited requests for aid, 90 per cent of which had to be turned down.

The guide is the most extensive analysis of Britain's charity finances yet undertaken. The accounts of more than 3,000 foundations were examined to determine the top 1,000. It shows that Garfield Weston, the chairman of Associated British Foods, is Britain's top philanthropist. The net assets of the Garfield Weston Foundation are worth £994 million. Mr Weston's trust is exceeded in size only by the Wellcome Foundation, with assets of £5.1 billion, and the Church Commissioners, with £2.4 billion.

Most charities cannot fall back on assets to provide future income or make up shortfalls. Most assets are concentrated in a few top foundations. Wellcome on its own accounts for a quarter of all charitable assets, while the top five charities together, with £9.2 billion between them, account for nearly half of the total.

Iain MacGregor, Wellcome's finance director, said: "Even with our fast growing income we cannot keep up with demand. We are only giving 30 to 40 per cent of the money being requested."

According to the guide, the loss of a pet or a terminal illness figures strongly as motives for donations from the public. Mr Scott said: "When it comes to making a will, it seems people tend to leave their money to the animals which have befriended them late in life, or whatever it is that eventually kills them off."

Campaigning nurse 'caused distress'

BY RONALD FAUX

A MALE nurse who breached patients' confidentiality in a campaign to increase staffing levels painted a "lurid and negative picture" of conditions on a geriatric ward at Stepping Hill hospital, Stockport, Greater Manchester, an industrial tribunal in Manchester was told yesterday.

John Hand QC, representing Stockport district health authority, said that Graham Pink, 62, a charge nurse at the hospital, had released to the press an account of the last hours of an elderly patient's life. "That account allowed the man's friends and family to identify the patient. It caused the family great distress and that alone would have been justification for Mr Pink's dismissal," he said.

Mr Pink, who is claiming unfair dismissal against the health authority, was sacked after turning down an alternative post. "There is absolutely no doubt that he intended to take his case to the press in a deliberate breach of confidentiality and that was in direct breach of his employment contract," Mr Hand said.

He told the tribunal that Mr Pink had claimed he was dismissed because he had spoken the truth as he saw it. He was "a sort of whistleblower" who refused to be gagged, who believed he had a moral duty to disclose what he did in the public interest, Mr Hand said.

Mr Pink wrote to the prime minister, among others, in his

year-long campaign for improved staffing and supervision levels at the hospital. The health authority was unable to accept his claims.

The hearing was adjourned after two hours to allow the tribunal to study more than 2,000 pages of documentation relating to the hearing, which is expected to last two weeks.

Mr Pink first "blew the whistle" in August 1989 when he wrote to Stockport health authority about his fears for the welfare of patients at Stepping Hill hospital. He listed a catalogue of alleged neglect which he said was caused by a shortage of staff.

Health officials visited wards at the hospital on the same night and a review of staffing levels was ordered, but in November 1989 Mr Pink was told that no more nurses could be provided.

Undaunted, he took his case to the highest level. A letter to Margaret Thatcher, then the prime minister, was met with a reply saying that it was a local matter.

Mr Pink's series of letters were published in a national newspaper and in May 1990 he received a written warning from his management, telling him to stop making the allegations. In defiance of this Mr Pink reported an incident involving a pensioner "lying in a pool of urine" to his local newspaper. He was suspended in August 1990 and sacked the next month.

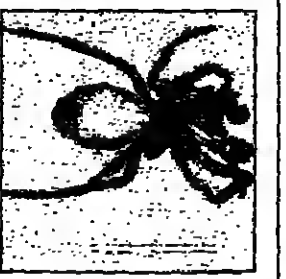
A spin-off for spider science

BY NIGEL HAWKES
SCIENCE EDITOR

A NEW species of spider has been discovered near Cambridge. Tiny, light brown and with very small eyes, the spider is believed to live underground, which may explain why it has only now revealed itself to science.

The spider was found by Heather Maher, who works for an agency of the agriculture ministry, when she laid traps for insects at the Boxworth Research Centre to monitor the effects of pesticides.

Dr Peter Merrett of the British Arachnological Society confirmed that the spider had never been recorded anywhere in the world. It belongs to the *Centroneris* genus of money spiders and has yet to be formally named. So far the traps have picked up 19 males but no nest has been found. At 1.2mm long, it is half the size of the average money spider.



1.2mm newcomer

Half black population was born in Britain

BY RICHARD FORD, HOME CORRESPONDENT

ALMOST half of the country's three million residents from ethnic minorities were born in the United Kingdom, according to a report published yesterday based on the 1991 census.

Forty-six per cent of the ethnic minority population was born here, with a large proportion of this group considering themselves to be black British rather than black African or black Caribbean.

The detailed study also showed the relative youthfulness of the ethnic minority community compared with the white population. Children up to the age of 16 form 30 per cent of the people in the ethnic minority community compared with less than 20 per cent in the white population. Those aged 65 and over form 3 per cent of the ethnic minority community, com-

pared with 16 per cent of the white population.

Peter Owen, of the ethnic relations research centre at Warwick University, who carried out the research, said:

"The figures show clearly the emergence of a British-born ethnic population that is tremendously youthful." His study of the census, the first to include a question on ethnic status, showed that more than half the black population is under 45.

Mr Owen's study shows that in the decade ending in 1991, the ethnic groups with the fastest growth were the Bangladeshis, whose numbers more than doubled to 162,000, and the Pakistanis, whose population increased by more than 200,000 to 476,000. The largest ethnic minority group in the United Kingdom are the Indians.

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London Marathon sticks to its route

BY JOHN GOODBODY, SPORTS NEWS CORRESPONDENT

The London Marathon will be run on its traditional route after all. After 17 months of negotiations, the government and the race organisers agreed yesterday that the event, on April 18, will start in Greenwich Park and end in St James's Park.

Demands by the national heritage department that the organisers should pay a new charge levied on events in the royal parks led to fears that the 20,000 runners would be barred from the usual route.

Although the government dropped its facility fee from £25,000 to £15,000 during negotiations, Chris Brasher, the chairman of the marathon's board of directors, described the demand as a "toll" which would have cut profits. Since the first London Marathon in 1981, the

event has raised £1.4 million for sport and recreation in the capital.

A compromise was reached in which the £15,000 will be used for recreational facilities in the royal parks. Mr Brasher, the 1956 Olympic steeplechase champion and founder of one of Britain's favourite sports events, said yesterday he was delighted that the government recognised the importance of the royal parks to the world-wide audience that watches the race.

"We are now actively discussing the use of St James's Park as our preferred finish for the next few years while Westminster Bridge undergoes repairs," he said. The Nutcracker London Marathon is likely to be watched on television in about 40 countries.

Robert Key, minister for sport, said he

was "pleased that discussions with the organisers had been concluded in a workmanlike fashion".

The dispute had led to a campaign to keep the race on its usual route and an early-day motion was tabled in the Commons by Tony Banks, the Labour MP for Newham North West. The government has always emphasised that it was following the recommendations of the Jenkins review on royal parks, that there should be some "clear financial benefit" to the parks when they are used to stage major events.

This year's race will feature Liz McColgan of Scotland, the British 10,000 metres record-holder, who has signed an agreement worth almost £500,000, plus possible bonuses, to run in the event for the next three years.

In the skies balmy weather lures flocks of early visitors but on the ground lack of rain causes concern

Water firms fear drought if dry spell continues

By LOUISE HIDAIGO

AN EXCEPTIONALLY dry February and the prospect of little rain this month have led to concerns that parts of Britain may be in the grip of drought again this summer.

The National Rivers Authority said yesterday that underground water levels in some parts of southeast England, the region most affected by drought last year, were showing no sign of recovery despite above average rain during the early winter.

A spokesman for the NRA said the authority was concerned that lack of rain in recent weeks could prove a blow to the recharge of water levels undergone in recent months.

The Water Services Association, which represents water companies in England and Wales, admitted the dryness of the past six weeks had put a temporary stop to the replenishment of underground water reserves.

"It's no secret that we would have liked to see the rain levels of the autumn and January continue," Paul Garrett, of the association, said. "A dry spring could mean problems for the South East, particularly the Kent and Essex regions."

East Anglia and north Kent, the most water-starved areas of England, required exceptionally high levels of rainfall this winter to bring levels in the underground chalk back to normal.

Last month was the driest February since 1986, which has done much to undermine the work of the autumn and January, when rainfall was double that of the previous year and parts of the Anglian coast found themselves under water.

The southern and Thames regions had only 10 per cent of the average rainfall for

February. East Anglia fared somewhat better, with 35 per cent of the long-term average.

March, traditionally one of the wetter months, has so far followed a similar pattern. Mike Woodley, a climatologist at the Meteorological Office, said: "March usually provides the last fling before the loss through evaporation of the spring and summer months. So far, it's been very dry, and it looks as if that will continue for the rest of the week."

Water companies and the National Rivers Authority have predicted it will take two wetter winters to allow the water table to recover fully in the worst-affected regions.

The current dry spell has halted the recovery in the chalk and limestone aquifers, the natural underground reservoirs where much of the country's natural water supply is stored. They are crucial to the South East, which relies heavily on underground reserves.

Terry Marsh, who monitors the collection of rainfall at the Hydrology Institute, said a repeat of the hot, dry summer and autumn of 1990 remained a possibility but that underground water levels and reservoir stocks had been fuelled by the early winter rains.

"A dry spell at this time is fairly pivotal. Water prospects for the year will depend on what happens between now and the end of April."

The drought, which began in autumn 1988, has been patchy and has shifted around the southern and eastern parts of England. Last year hose-pipe bans and more drastic restrictions affected millions of homes and businesses, but the worst damage was to nature and wildlife.

Forecast, page 22



Sunshine flights: warm weather and southerly winds have brought an early wave of migrant birds to Britain, including the rarely seen great spotted cuckoo, right. Ornithologists also report evidence that many birds are nesting sooner because of warmer summers and milder winters (Michael Hornsby writes). Bird watchers have seen the cuckoo on St Martin's on the Isles of Scilly, hundreds of miles north of its normal breeding grounds in south-

ern France, Spain and Portugal, where it migrates after wintering in Africa. Chris Harbard, of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, said yesterday: "If there is a warm airstream and the wind is in the right direction, the odd cuckoo will overshoot and reach our shores."

There have been about 35 sightings over the last 30 years in Cornwall or on the Isles of Scilly, though usually not until April. Another rare visitor, for contrasting

reasons, is the killdeer, left, a North American plover spotted on south Mainland, Shetland. It is thought to have been blown out into the Atlantic by the storms on the east coast of the United States and carried across the ocean in a trough of low pressure. Only seven have been seen in Britain in March in the past 30 years. Steve Gandlett, editor of the magazine *Birding World*, said other Africa wintering birds to look out for if the present weather

continues are the hoopoe, the purple heron, the Sardinian warbler and the subalpine warbler. "They all migrate north in spring and usually stop in the Mediterranean, but some will keep going if the conditions are right."

Regular March visitors, such as wheatears, blackcaps, black redstarts and firecrests, are being spotted in greater numbers than usual, other summer migrants, including chiffchaffs, swallows, tree

pipits and sand martins, have arrived several weeks early. According to surveys by the British Trust for Ornithology, many resident and migrant birds in Britain are nesting, on average, a week earlier than 20 years ago. Humphrey Crick, the survey coordinator, said: "The shift started in the mid-1970s and 33 out of 82 species are now nesting significantly earlier, apparently because of the warmer weather associated with global warming."

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The Euro-face: 6 per cent British
Meet Mr Europe, aged 3 1/2

By NICK NUTTALL
TECHNOLOGY
CORRESPONDENT

THE FACE of the average European has been sculpted by computer technology. Hidden in the jaw line, nostrils and cheeks are the facial elements that underpin late 20th century western Europe's racial mix.

Ethnically, the computerised reflection is nearly 18 per cent African and 18 per cent non-EC European. The face is about 6 per cent British.

It also reflects the fact that more than a quarter of the people living in the Community are from countries such as India and Turkey. The face is 49 per cent male and 51 per cent female and is aged 31 1/2 years.

Paul Wombell, curator of Impressions Gallery in York and one of the people behind the image, said that if the peoples of modern Europe all interbred their offspring might resemble the face.

The image was created to support *Mask*, an exhibition which opens at the gallery this week and which examines society's use of masks to hide or reveal aspects of character and features.

The Euro-face project was led by Valerie Brown, working at the gallery on an Arts Council bursary. She gathered statistics on the peoples of the EC and they were fed into a computer which generated images from a database holding facial features.

Ex-officer in prison suicide bid

Roderick Newall, the former army officer accused of murdering his parents in Jersey five years ago, has attempted suicide for a third time.

Prison authorities in Gibraltar, where he is being held, said that guards saw him try to take his life on Sunday. They would not confirm reports that he had a smuggled spring.

Mr Newall, 27, whose parents Nicholas and Elizabeth vanished in October 1987, is due in court next week over an extradition matter. Since his arrest at sea in August he has taken a drug overdose and slashed his wrists.

Journalists win tax battle

The Inland Revenue has failed in its latest attempt to make journalists liable for tax on the money they are given to buy newspapers.

In a test case, the Court of Appeal accepted that five journalists from the *Daily Mail* and *Mail on Sunday* had to buy newspapers to perform their work, and expenses paid were therefore tax-deductible.

Pension fraud

Rachel Richardson, a social worker aged 46, of Merton, co. Durham, was fined £50 with £500 costs by Newcastle Crown Court for claiming her father's civil service pension six months after his death.

Trial delayed

The trial of Beverley Allitt, the nurse accused of murdering four children at Grantham hospital, was adjourned after Nottingham Crown Court was told that she was suffering severe anorexia.

Sailors charged

Three Royal Navy ratings are to appear in court over damage to a portrait at the Guildhall in Helston, Cornwall, of Wing Commander Guy Gibson VC, who led the Dambusters raid 50 years ago.

Kung fu chop

Lessons in martial arts for police at Sefton, Merseyside, have been suspended after 26 officers were injured.

Boundary deal puts Currie's European seat hopes at risk

By SHEILA GUNN, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

CELEBRATIONS by Edwina Currie and Glenys Kinnock for their selection to fight two European seats could be premature as both constituencies of Bedfordshire South and South East Wales may be forced to re-select their candidates.

The electoral prospects of the former health minister and the wife of the former Labour leader are at risk from a little-noticed deal at December's European Community summit in Edinburgh to give Britain an extra six MEPs from the June 1994 elections.

To fulfil the obligations Kenneth Clarke, the home secretary, must push a bill through Parliament this session to change the European parliamentary boundaries. However, the legislation has become the latest victim of the Maastricht ratification process.

The Home Office confirmed yesterday that officials were still grappling with the options while ministers were seeking an agreement with other political parties on the redrawing of the boundaries.

A spokesman said: "It looks

increasingly pushed for time. Ministers are consulting with colleagues and, hopefully, at an early stage they will take this matter forward."

It is understood that picking the extra MEPs through some form of proportional representation voting system, as in other European Community countries, has been ruled out. In addition the Boundary Commission is too weighed down with rejigging the parliamentary map to have time to carry out all the usual procedures for changing the Euro-constituency boundaries.

A senior government source predicted that the Home Office, with help from outside consultants, would work out the changes.

However ministers recognise they need the agreement of other parties to make sure the bill passes swiftly through both Houses because of lack of parliamentary time this session and possible antics by the Tory EC-sceptics.

Although England can statistically justify taking all the new seats, it looks increasingly as if Scotland, and possibly Wales, will be allocated one more seat each as part of a

cross-party agreement. The boundaries in Northern Ireland, the only part of the United Kingdom to elect MEPs through PR, will not be changed.

Conservative party officials have been pressing the 81 constituencies to select candidates as quickly as possible in spite of the prospect of re-selections when the boundaries are changed.

Jeff Rooker, the chairman of the Labour party's campaign for electoral reform, has challenged John Major to disclose his plans for accommodating the new seats.

In a letter the Labour MP for Birmingham Perry Barr accused the prime minister of planning "nothing less than an electoral coup d'état" by seeking to ensure that all the extra seats fall to the Conservatives.

Mr Rooker added: "Given that you never made any public statements during the British presidency about the soundings you were taking on the issue of the extra seats and that you appear to have made no proposals for any all-party discussions on the matter, this can be the only conclusion to be reached."

Lamont buries Victorian tradition

By PETER RIDDELL, POLITICAL EDITOR

THIS afternoon will mark the end of one of the great rituals of parliamentary life, the spring Budget. Like other British traditions it assumed its familiar form in the High Victorian era. Since Gladstone's four- or five-hour speeches 130 years ago, when the battered little red box was first used, each Chancellor has savoured his, not so far her, moment in the limelight.

Yet, paradoxically, the proposed change in timing, shifting the date to late November, marks a return to traditional practice. The new unified Budget will combine tax and spending, as the spring Budget used to do until the 1960s.

The Budget has always been partly theatrical, ever since Gladstone mixed morally uplifting orations on the state of the nation with detailed proposals on army and navy estimates and minor changes in taxes.

Budgets have been the vehicles for social reform. Lloyd George's 1909 Budget was a landmark not just in the creation of the welfare state but also in constitutional reform since it provoked the battle which led, via two general elections, to curbs on the power of the Lords over financial measures.

The Budget has become surrounded with increasing ceremony and secrecy. It has been a resigning matter for even the merest hint of proposals to be leaked. The most famous example was in November 1947 when Hugh Dalton chatted to a lobby correspondent a few minutes before delivering his statement. The report appeared in the stop press in a few thousand copies, but Dalton had to resign.

Roy Jenkins recalls in his memoirs, *A Life at the Centre*, how, ahead of his first Budget in 1958, "it was still the heroic, post-Gladstonian period of Budget secrecy. Only a couple of dozen senior officials and their secretaries were 'Budget-cleared'... There was even a secure zone in the Treasury marked by white tape, within which alone Budget papers could circulate freely." At his country home he hid Budget papers, not in a safe, but just above where he kept his wine.

Such secrecy has been justified as preventing pre-emptive action by taxpayers. The gradualism which the Chancellor and his top advisers go for the two months before Budget day also gives them relative peace in which to reach decisions. The Treasury has turned this secrecy to its advantage. As Nigel



Showing the way: Denis Healey, who delivered three statements in addition to his Budget in 1976

Lawson records in his *View from Number 11*, "there is effectively no role for cabinet in the Budget process".

In March 1981, a group of the then "wets" — Jim Prior, Peter Walker and Ian Gilmour — protested strongly when they learnt on Budget day that taxes were to be raised at the depth of the recession. They contemplated resignation, but in the end did not go. This led to the largely meaningless concession that the full cabinet could discuss options before the Budget.

Purdah has looked increasingly absurd. This year, Norman Lamont has made occasional remarks about favourable statistics and, unusually, gave an interview over the weekend, largely to bolster his own standing. There has also been the innovation of the forecasters' panel, the seven wise men, though their role has been to offer their views, rather than to hear those of the Treasury.

The pre-eminence of the spring Budget — over the past decade in March rather than April — has gradually declined. Economic crises, usually in foreign exchange markets, have led to further announcements in the autumn. These occurred in 1947 and 1955 and, as pressures mounted from the early 1970s, became more frequent. In 1976, Denis

Healey delivered three major statements in addition to his regular spring Budget.

From the late 1960s, spending plans began to be published separately from tax measures, in an annual white paper in December or January. From the late 1970s the Treasury was also statutorily obliged to produce economic forecasts twice a year. Geoffrey Howe regularised the position with a formal Autumn Statement in 1982.

A unified Budget has been urged for some time, but was rejected by Lord Lawson because of the uncertainties of deciding on public borrowing, and hence taxes, four months ahead of the start of the financial year. He was also concerned about creating an immense burden of work for the Chancellor and his officials and of tilting the balance towards the public spending lobbies.

Mr Lamont, however, announced last year that the system would be changed from late 1993 so that both sides of the account will be decided at the same time. The traditional Budget ceremony should still survive, albeit with a late autumn chill. Lord Lawson has defended the ritual: "It seems to be no bad thing that for one day, in the year the attention of the entire nation should be focused on the national economy."



Shamed: Hugh Dalton, who had to resign in 1947

Maastricht rebel backs Major

By PHILIP WEBSTER, CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE government was given a small but much-needed boost yesterday in its efforts to ratify the Maastricht treaty. George Walden, a senior Tory MP who has been regularly abstaining on the treaty legislation, said that he would in future vote for it. Mr Walden said that failure to ratify could plunge Britain into a domestic political crisis and an international cul-de-sac.

With the government's majority on key votes likely to be in single figures from now on, even with Liberal Democrat support, every defector from the rebel camp will be welcomed with open arms.

Mr Walden, MP for Buckingham and a former education minister, described Maastricht as an "unnecessary, semi-incoherent treaty which now breathes on one lung, the other, EMU, having collapsed."

He said that his priority had always been to prevent a collision between Britain and Europe, and that after the Danish referendum he hoped the treaty might expire "without Britain's fingerprints on the dagger". But with the French referendum having been won, and the Danes increasingly likely to ratify, "my preference for death at

the hands of others seems no longer on offer."

"Logically I must therefore rethink my position," Mr Walden said. "Failure by Britain alone to ratify would lead to the confrontation I fear, with all the economic perils."

He said that it would have been more comfortable to continue to distance himself from "this wretched treaty" by quietly abstaining. "But that would have been to evade the issue. In terms of practical politics we are reaching the stage where opposition to the treaty only makes sense in the context of opposition to Europe. I have no qualms about adjusting my position in

the face of reality. Pragmatism, our super-patriots should remember, is a British virtue."

Mr Walden's shift will be seen as important by the Tory whips. Last Thursday there were doubts over whether the government would win the procedural motion to extend the sitting, even if it had been granted Liberal Democrat support. In the event that support was not forthcoming and the government abandoned its attempt to go on into the night.

John Major's European policy received another boost yesterday, from business leaders representing 240,000 firms. Christopher Stewart-Smith, president of the British Chamber of Commerce, said in a letter: "European commercial integration is a process upon which many UK firms are relying. We urge you to press ahead with the ratification process, which has our full support."

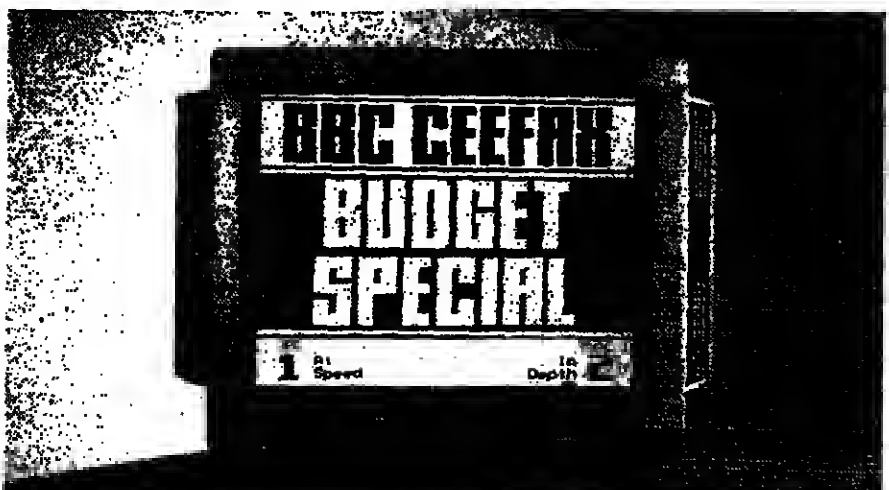
Richard Brown, the chamber's policy director, highlighted the case of a firm that made the glue for Coca-Cola labels. Its exports had increased about sixfold in the past four years, mainly to Europe.



Walden: rethinking his position on Europe

Danish call, page 14
Leading article, page 19

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Labour demands Budget to halt employment slump

By JILL SHERMAN, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

JOHN Major has bailed the amount spent on training and help for the jobless since he became prime minister, the Labour party claimed yesterday.

Gordon Brown, the shadow Chancellor, put in a final bid for a Budget for jobs, alleging that Mr Major had cut the real value of help which each unemployed person received from £1.18 to £0.65 next year.

"Far from ensuring opportunity for all, John Major has been an unemployment prime minister in a government of economic neglect," Mr Brown said yesterday.

Mr Brown, who subjected press journalists to a lengthy speech for the benefit of television cameras, gave a warning that today's Budget would probably only scratch the surface.

"Announcing yet another underfunded temporary jobs programme under a new title, reannouncing the Heathrow rail fiasco, masking tax rises by calling them help for the environment, will not add up to the new industry

and employment strategy the country urgently needs." Labour's analysis of the government's 1993-4 supply estimates showed that as employment rose as fast as ever.

The government proposed almost £100 million of cuts in schemes for the unemployed, business and industry, Mr Brown said.

Even new government initiatives, Training for Work and One Stop Business Services, were being cut by 7 and 14 per cent respectively. The level of the government's commitment to the unemployed was a real terms cut of £623 in training and assistance for each jobless person since 1990-1, he said.

These cuts are not only an insult to our fellow citizens who are unemployed, they are yet another indication of the complete failure of the Tories to understand why unemployment is rising," Mr Brown said.

Diary, page 18

Disability reforms planned

CHANGES in the system for making payments to people with disabilities were hailed last night as a step towards a more caring society by Nicholas Scott, the minister for the disabled.

Mr Scott was opening the Commons second reading debate on the disability (grants) bill, which fits into government plans for more community care. The bill creates two funds which the government says will extend the scope of assistance for the disabled and would operate in partnership with local authorities.

It is estimated that about 1,500 people a year would get a cash payment from the new funds as well as help from their council. The budget for the first year would be £4 million. Mr Scott said: "This bill marks another step in the movement towards a more caring society which offers additional opportunities for all its members, not just those who are able-bodied."

Barry Sheerman, for the Opposition, questioned the need for changes and said he had serious reservations about the bill, which would lead to funds "far inferior" to the independent living allowance they would replace.

Lib Dems take a leaf out of Clinton book

By JILL SHERMAN, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

LIBERAL Democrats will use the Newbury by-election as the launch-pad for a new campaigning strategy to set an alternative agenda for party politics. Paddy Ashdown and the Liberal Democrat candidate, David Rendel, will adopt a Clintonesque approach, holding small group meetings in town halls to give the public a chance to air its views.

"The campaign will be built around a conversation with the people rather than a confrontation between parties," a party source said.

The Liberal Democrats are determined that the by-election will not disintegrate into the normal slanging match, with candidates trying to score points off each other without discussing the issues.

The town hall meetings will be similar in style to those held by John Major at the beginning of his campaign, but anyone from any political persuasion will be able to attend. A theme is expected to be selected for each meeting.

Mr Ashdown and Mr Rendel will also argue for the need for strong leadership in the absence of any sense of direction from the government. "We are not just going to mobilise dissatisfaction with the government but set out an alternative direction for the country," the source said.

Mr Ashdown is intent on building an alliance with non-

political groups such as churches and voluntary organisations as part of an attempt to restore the public's trust in politicians. While he will work behind the scenes on building up trust between the Liberal Democrats and Labour there will be no formal overtures.

The new style of campaigning, which Mr Ashdown hopes will set the mould for party politics in the future, was trailed in his speech in Leicester last weekend. "What we see at Westminster is a

daily ritual which has little to do with our nation. It is politics for its own sake. Confrontation as an end to itself," Mr Ashdown said.

"We will ask people, when they vote for us, to vote for something wider and broader even than Liberal Democrat ideas. We will ask them to vote not just for a change of policy, but for a new kind of politics: politics which values co-operation and puts the interests of the country before the interests of our parties."

Doctors' pay rise held to 1.5%

By NICHOLAS WOOD, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE government stuck to its tight public sector pay ceiling yesterday as it held increases next month for Britain's 30,000 family doctors to 1.5 per cent.

The announcement by Virginia Bottomley, the health secretary, came after the pre-Christmas snub to the government by the doctors' and dentists' review body, which it refused to produce a report this year.

The rise takes GPs' net earnings from their current

£40,010 to £40,610. Family doctors operate as small businessmen within the National Health Service and the increases announced yesterday by Mrs Bottomley contained some consolation for the profession.

The allowance made for expenses incurred in running a practice is to be increased by 11 per cent to £22,190 because of past under-estimates by the review body.

This increase is partly offset, however, by a clawback of

£497 a head for a previous overpayment to GPs. Fees and allowances for services such as immunisations are increased by 3.3 per cent across the board.

So-called gross income (including expenses) is to rise by 3.9 per cent from £59,977 in the current year to £62,303 from April.

Mrs Bottomley also promised talks with GPs' leaders on their demands for a big increase in payments made to trainees for night calls.

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THE TIMES TUESDAY MARCH 16 1993

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Simple to operate, the I-series has its own built-in user guide to help you use the advanced memory and many other features efficiently.

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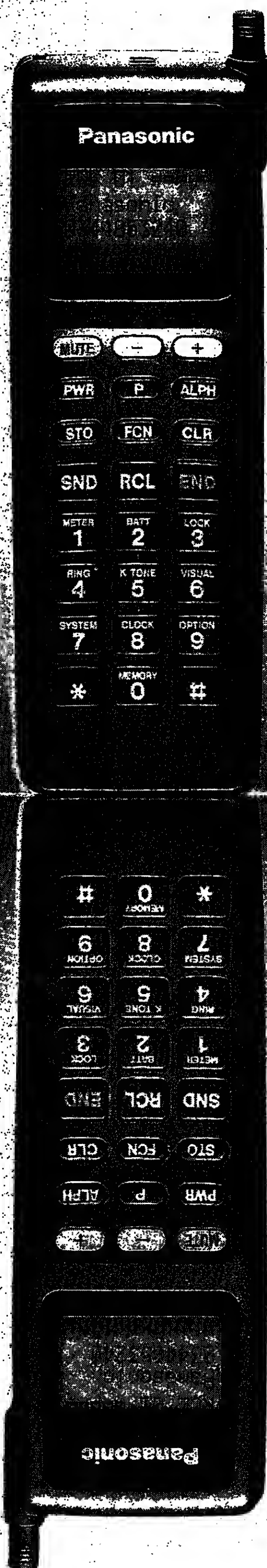
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The new I-series car-phone has been as

North Korea issues war alert and closes borders

By DAVID WATTS

NORTH Korea gave a warning yesterday that war could break out "at any moment" after the government banned entry to the country by foreigners, including diplomats.

The war warning came as a blackout was introduced and war rumours spread among the population. Ri Tcheul, North Korean ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva, said that bullets and shells were being fired "towards our side" in the joint American-South Korean Team Spirit military exercises.

"If we respond to it, it will mean a war and this war cannot but be an all-out war," Mr Ri said. "That is why we are stressing that a hair-trigger situation has been created which could lead to an outbreak of war at any time." The ban on foreign entry was introduced as the North Korean leadership prepared for an extended confrontation with the international community over demands for inspection of its nuclear capability.

In South Korea, the authorities are reported to be seeking a delay in the withdrawal of

the USS *Independence* aircraft carrier battle group and the thousands of troops flown in for the Team Spirit exercises that are due to end on Thursday.

The complete closure of an already isolated country that has few diplomatic contacts



Kim Il Sung: vowed to control South Korea

outside the less developed states of Africa is bringing concern that hardliners in the North are again in the ascendancy under Kim Jong Il, the son of the "Great Leader" Kim

Il Sung, who took control of the military last year.

The sense of a foreign threat to the country will serve the government well in its attempts to enhance the image of Kim Jong Il for the day when the "Great Leader", who vowed to take control of South Korea, dies. Although he commands the armed forces, Kim Jong Il has no military record to point to.

Rumours are said to be rife among North Koreans that war could break out around the March 25 deadline set by the International Atomic Energy Agency for allowing nuclear inspections. "They are saying they believe the attack will come from outside, not that North Korea will start it," one resident was reported by Reuters as saying. The capital has been blacked out every night since Saturday and people have been ordered to cover their windows with thick blackout curtains.

The atomic energy agency announced yesterday that it would hold an emergency meeting on Thursday about Pyongyang's refusal to allow

inspection of its nuclear sites. The statement added that the Vienna-based UN watchdog would hear a report on inspections in North Korea by Hans Blix, its director-general.

North Korea allowed agency inspectors to check civilian nuclear facilities and equipment last year, but the international body said it was concerned about what it called inconsistencies between North Korea's data on its nuclear activities and analyses of samples and measurements taken by the inspectors.

The Russian news agency Tass said from Pyongyang: "The foreign ministry has instructed consular departments abroad to halt issuing any visas for travel to North Korea, including to diplomatic workers." The decision took effect last week when the country put its army on high alert after the resumption of joint American-South Korean military exercises.

North Korea withdrew last week from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, aimed at preventing the spread of nuclear weapons.



Great survivor: Li Peng, the Chinese prime minister, delivering his state of the nation address yesterday, which was notable for its lack of headline rhetoric

Man in the news

Chinese leader outwits detractors

FROM CATHERINE SAMPSON IN PEKING

EVER since Li Peng, the Chinese prime minister, allied himself so closely with the bloody army crackdown on pro-democracy demonstrators in 1989, there has been speculation that his days must be numbered. It was Mr Li who had been seen sneering at the students on national television, and celebrating their demise. In 1989, it was difficult to see how he could survive.

The special five-yearly session of the National People's Congress, which began yesterday, would have been the perfect opportunity to sideline Mr Li, and perhaps to brand him a scapegoat for the bloodshed. As Mr Li opened parliament, however, it was clear that he is about to embark on another five-year term in office.

Mr Li has survived widespread unpopularity because of his ability to blow with the wind of Chinese politics. He is a Soviet-educated technocrat, who is a cautious, even conservative, economist. In 1988, in response to an overheating economy, it was Mr Li who launched a tough austerity drive, clashing with Zhao Ziyang, the former reformist Communist party general secretary who was removed from office in 1989. But since Deng Xiaoping, the senior leader, emerged last year to call for capitalist reforms, Mr Li has voiced his support for these changes, doing what amounts to a U-turn with no sign of embarrassment.

His speech yesterday was notable for the scarcity of its headline ideological rhetoric. Mr Li did mention the 1989 demonstrations and the army crackdown, and he emphasised that in the face of the collapse of communism elsewhere, China would "stand firm like a rock in the East". But that was just a faint echo of the speeches of years past.

There is no doubt that Mr Li's political opportunism reflects his determination to make it to the summit of Chinese politics. Yet Mr Li remains, as he was in 1989, essentially a messenger rather than a policy-maker.

Whether blasting the reform proposals of Chris Patten, the Hong Kong governor, or announcing an increase in the projected growth rate, Mr Li is in essence a mouthpiece for the decisions of Mr Deng.

Mr Li, 65, comes from Sichuan, the same home province as Mr Deng. He joined the Communist party at 17, four years before Mao Tse-tung declared the founding of communist China. The orphan of a communist official shot by nationalists, he was taken in at the age of 11 by Chou En-lai, then prime minister. Mr Li is in many ways an unexceptional and uncharismatic man, but his revolutionary pedigree is believed to have done him immeasurable good in his climb up the hierarchy.

China lashes out, page 1
Michael Yahuda, page 18
Bank results, page 23

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Home Insurance: AA to the rescue.

The unique AA 'Homequote' service compares prices from major insurers on our top quality policy - and finds you our best deal while you're still on the phone.

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No one company offered the ideal policy, so we developed our own.

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Within minutes, we tell you which is the best deal.

And if you want, we can put you 'on cover' immediately.

AA checks the cost of insuring your home

THE COST of insuring your home and contents is likely to soar this year. Home insurance premiums have been double the 1991 figures.

The reason for the increase is that insurance companies have had to pay out more claims than they are receiving from policyholders.

While home insurance has traditionally been a family policy, many people are now thinking of shopping around to find a more competitive quote.

But this can be very time-consuming. It can also be difficult for the homeowner to compare one quote with another, as most offer different features and benefits.

Now AA Homequote, part of the AA Insurance Services, has introduced a computerised home insurance quotation service for

the convenience of its customers. The service is available to all AA members and non-members alike.

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If the worst happens, call us anytime and we'll help you sort the problem out. We'll find local trades people to come round and help.

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You're covered against your possessions being stolen from your house, even from your garage and garden shed.

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In the event of fire, we'll cover you for all your possessions that are damaged.

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This plan covers damage caused by burst pipes and other types of water damage including floods.

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We'll pay the legal costs (up to £25,000 in appropriate cases) if you have a personal dispute with neighbours, shops, employers - even if the dispute is not directly related to your home.

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Garden furniture is expensive - so this policy protects you if your garden furniture is stolen or damaged (other than by storm or flood).

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You're covered up to £500 should a power cut defrost the freezer - or even if it just accidentally breaks down.

CREDIT CARDS

You get automatic cover of up to £500 against the fraudulent use of your credit cards.

STOLEN CASH

If up to £300 cash is stolen from your home, you can claim under this plan.

24-HR LEGAL HELPLINE

Goods not up to scratch? Nuisance from neighbours? Unsatisfactory workmanship? Our legal helpline gives you free advice any time of the day or night.

BUILDINGS COVER TOO

We also have a policy to cover the structure of your home, against storms, floods, subsidence, and accidental damage. It can be added to the home contents policy, or we'll cover you separately. Ask us to quote for cover when you call us.

EASY PAYMENTS

Take advantage of our own easy payment terms, or pay your premium by credit card to spread the cost of your insurance.

AA Homequote

For Insurance, we're all you need to know.

The first £50 of each home contents claim is not covered. All applications are subject to underwriting. A specialist policy is available on request. Call us today on 0800 900 888. We'll be happy to help you. We'll be happy to help you. We'll be happy to help you.

UN blames military for murders

By DAVID ADAMS

AFTER an extensive investigation into atrocities committed during El Salvador's civil war, a three-man "Truth Commission" appointed by the United Nations has accused seven senior Salvadoran military officers of ordering the 1989 murder of six Jesuit priests. The commission also wants more than 40 military officers dismissed for human rights abuses.

In a broadcast before the report was published, President Cristiani called on the National Assembly to pass an amnesty for those linked to crimes by the commission. At the weekend, he accepted the resignation of General René Ponce, the defence minister, who had been under increasing pressure to step down after it became known that the commission would link him to the murder of the Jesuits.

The Clinton administration and American congressmen, however, are backing demands by Salvadoran opposition parties that all the accused officers must accept their guilt by resigning before being pardoned. On Friday the US State Department said it would withhold \$11 million (£7.7 million) in military aid to El Salvador until all guilty officers were removed.

Although the Clinton administration has offered its strong support for the findings, the report is deeply embarrassing to the governments of George Bush and Ronald Reagan. The UN commission says that, apart from financing the Salvadoran government at a rate of almost \$1 million a day at the height of the war, American military advisers at the embassy in San Salvador hampered investigations into the killing of the Jesuits.

Cuba gives Castro five more years

FROM DAVID ADAMS IN MIAMI

Cuba's new National Assembly met for the first time yesterday to "re-elect" Fidel Castro for five more years as President of the Council of State, the country's ruling body (David Adams writes).

Analysts of Cuban politics say, however, that last month's single-party national election for the 589-member assembly was less remarkable for the democratic nature of the vote than for what it revealed of Dr Castro's lasting ability to persuade Cubans to do his bidding. Whether out of genuine commitment to the Cuban Communist party or for fear of persecution, 90 per cent of Cubans voted in favour of Dr Castro's candidates.

In recent interviews, Dr Castro, 66, has said he is tired, adding that he is ready to stand down if the conditions are right. Experts agree that Dr Castro shows no signs of relinquishing power while Cuba remains at daggers drawn with Washington.

To retire now would be cowardly, he says. "He will not simply resign or scuttle

off into golden exile. Nobody who knows Castro can imagine that he will do anything other than stay and fight." Wayne Smith, former head of the American diplomatic mission in Havana who is now a critic of his country's policy towards Cuba, said.

There has been talk of unrest in Cuban military ranks that might lead to an overthrow of the government, but the evidence suggests otherwise, with Dr Castro's brother Raul firmly in charge of the army.

The end of communist rule in the former Soviet bloc has robbed Cuba of 85 per cent of its overseas markets and half its hard currency revenue. Shortages of basic goods, food and energy are acute. This year's sugar harvest, which accounts for 80 per cent of all exports, is expected to be a record low. A potential scenario often discussed by observers is the outbreak of rioting over food shortages. But fear of Dr Castro's system seems enough to deter Cubans from civil disobedience.

Suspects wage gun battle as city braces itself for fresh attacks and more devices are found

Police say foreign brains were behind Bombay bombings

■ The Indians, suspecting an international terror ring, have found similarities between the Bombay blasts and the New York explosion

FROM CHRISTOPHER THOMAS IN BOMBAY

TWO more bombs were discovered in central Bombay yesterday, three days after a wave of explosions shattered prime economic targets and killed more than 300 people. Police fought a gun battle last night with two men suspected of involvement in the bombings as the city braced itself for more attacks.

The continuing threat points to a concerted campaign to disrupt the economy by bringing chaos to India's commercial capital. Police and politicians are convinced that the attacks are being orchestrated or aided by a foreign organisation or government. Suspicion is focused on the Islamic world, although there is no firm evidence. Amarjit Singh Samra, the Bombay police commissioner, said last night that the explosives used last Friday were not available even to the Indian army and they had not previously been used in this country. He

believed the bombings had international links: "The hand may be in Bombay, but the brain is far away."

The latest bombs were attached to scooters, the registered owners of which were arrested after failing to convince police that they had sold the vehicles to unidentified men for cash. While the owners were being interrogated, police held a gun battle with two men suspected of involvement in the bombing campaign, named as Mangesh Pawar, a Hindu, and Philoo Khan, a Muslim. They had been identified by staff at two hotels that were bombed on Friday. Police said they were wanted for previous murders and attempted murders and opened fire with AK47 rifles as armed officers approached. The pair escaped in a car.

Three unexploded bombs have been uncovered since Friday. Those defused yesterday were found close to the gold and diamond market, and would have caused substantial numbers of casualties. Indian police have asked Interpol to help them trace an Iranian hotel and restaurant owner who disappeared with his family after Friday's explosions. All his properties were destroyed in anti-Muslim rioting in December and January. He has been named as Yalub Mornin, who is believed to have headed the local group of Hezbollah Islamists, a fundamentalist organisation. His Bombay address was found in an abandoned vehicle from which AK56 rifles and empty magazines were recovered on Friday.

Indian security sources noted similarities between the Bombay blasts and the explosion at the World Trade Centre in New York, both of which occurred on a Friday. The kinds of explosives used appear to be similar, and most of the Bombay attacks were with car bombs, as in New York. Two American forensic experts are due in Bombay today to help establish if there is a link between the New York and Bombay atrocities.

Hindu politicians are describing the attacks as a Pakistani plot to destabilise India's financial capital and to stop the country becoming a serious economic power. Nawaz Sharif, the Pakistani prime minister, said the accusation was absurd and described the bombings as a wanton act of destruction. But the finger of suspicion seems to point towards involvement by an Islamic organisation.

The city is determined to fight back, and the Bombay Stock Exchange defiantly resumed limited trading yesterday amid the rubble and chaos of twisted girders, shattered walls and sagging roofs. Jobbers and brokers operated from the old ring because the new one, which opened four months ago, was damaged.

The index moved up slightly from Friday's level on a modest buying spree, a sign of confidence despite the blitz. It will, however, be at least three months before full trading is resumed.

Bombay has a vibrant underworld with important political connections. The so-called religious riots in December and January were politically inspired to get rid of Sudhakar Naik, the chief minister of Maharashtra state, who has just been replaced by Sharad Pawar, the former defence minister. Mr Pawar certainly has some influence over Bal Thackeray, leader of Shiv Sena, the extremist Hindu group that was blamed for most of the rioting in December and January. Far from seizing the opportunity presented by the perception of an Islamic threat and sending his hordes out in the streets, Mr Thackeray has appealed for calm.



Back in business: stockbrokers gathering yesterday outside the Bombay Stock Exchange, the trading hall of which was destroyed in Friday's chain bombings. The city returned to work, defying the campaign to disrupt the economy by bringing chaos to the commercial capital

Pretoria focuses on peace and economy

FROM MICHAEL HAMLYN IN JOHANNESBURG

SOUTH Africa is making renewed efforts this week to break away from spiralling violence and the economy. The results are likely to be mixed.

During the past weekend, when the dead from the previous two weeks of violence were buried, Nelson Mandela, president of the African National Congress, and Chief Mangosuthu Buthe, chief minister of KwaZulu and president of the Inkatha Freedom Party, made speeches in the strife-torn Natal Midlands urging their followers to turn to peace. "We must think through our heads, not through our blood," said Mr Mandela.

At the same time peace moves between the two sides are going ahead, and European Commission observers in Natal are expected to announce an initiative aimed at brokering a new accord. A peace symbol will be launched this week to assist in marketing peace as a commodity.

On the economy, Derek Keys, the finance minister will introduce his 1993 budget tomorrow. The forecasts are that it will hit virtually everyone, since government spending has been running out of control, and with the recession and sanctions biting, taxation revenue has declined.

Mr Keys has tried to take some of the sting out of black protests against his measures by announcing that he proposes to introduce zero-rate value-added tax on certain essential foodstuffs. The imposition of VAT two years ago caused street protests led by the Confederation of South African Trade Unions.

However, a declaration by President de Klerk that government spending is to be curbed, and that state employees will not receive more than a 5 per cent pay increase, has led to noises from other black unions, especially teachers. Mr de Klerk yesterday met representatives of the most militant black teachers' organisation, the South African Democratic Teachers' Union, who insisted that the increase should be part of their agenda. Mr de Klerk insisted that the ceiling was not negotiable. However, Shepherd Mdlalana, the union president, said: "Our members will definitely not leave it like that."



Sharif, condemned for wanton destruction

Settlers put pressure on Rabin

FROM RICHARD BREESTON IN JERUSALEM

JEWISH settlers demonstrated yesterday against the Israeli government, protesting about an upsurge in violence and in an effort to prevent Yitzhak Rabin, the prime minister, from making any concessions during his meeting with President Clinton.

At the Kumeira checkpoint in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, hundreds of settlers from local farms tried to force their way past United Nations troops observers across the ceasefire line into Syrian-held territory. Police officers said that several demonstrators were detained during the protest, which was intended to draw attention to the left-wing coalition government's reported plans for a phased withdrawal from the captured Golan Heights in return for peace with Syria.

"We have seen Rabin in six

months change his mind 30 times," said Eli Malka, one of the leaders of the settlers who insist that the Labour-led government should not relinquish any territory from the strategic plateau captured in 1967. Although details of Mr Rabin's three-and-a-half-hour meeting with Mr Clinton at the White House yesterday were not disclosed, the Israeli leader was widely expected to set out his secret plans for a deal with Damascus, which is likely to be unveiled at the resumption of the Middle East peace talks, due to take place on April 20.

In Jerusalem and the occupied West Bank, similar protests took place yesterday afternoon and evening, this time by angry Jewish settlers demonstrating about deteriorating security after attacks by Palestinians. In the latest inci-

dent, two Jewish settlers hiking near the West Bank settlement of Eli were run over and killed by a Palestinian hit and run driver. After the attack, heavily armed settlers went on the rampage in the Palestinian town of Ramallah near by.

Further north, in the Israeli town of Afula, a Palestinian was captured by armed civilians. Including a Knesset member from the right-wing Tsomet party, after he stabbed an American tourist in the back. In a separate incident in the town of Beit Shemesh near Jerusalem, an Israeli motorist was stabbed by a Palestinian.

The government has promised to build new security fencing around some of the most vulnerable Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip and the police have announced plans to train up to 2,000 new officers.

British crew lost as storm hits freighter

FROM JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

THE storm that swept the East Coast of the United States sank a freighter with British crewmen on board yesterday as it headed out into the Atlantic off Canada.

Rescuers were searching the seas off Nova Scotia for the 33 British and Chinese crew of the Gold Bond Conveyor, which sank 65 miles off Cape Sable Island in 60 ft waves as it carried gypsum ore from Halifax to Tampa, Florida.

Major Michael Dorey, in charge of the search, said that seven of the crew held British passports but appeared to be from Hong Kong. He said that although two planes and four rescue helicopters were continuing the search, it was unlikely that any crew members would be found alive.

One body was recovered from the sea last night.

A British vessel, the Havkong, was two nautical miles away when the Conveyor got into trouble but was unable to rescue the crew before the Liberian-registered freighter went down.

The storm left at least 112 people dead from Cuba to Quebec. At least 26 people died in Florida as 50 tornadoes whipped across the Sunshine State. Seven died in Alabama, five in North Carolina, four in both Georgia and Virginia, one in Kentucky and West Virginia, one in Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, and South Carolina. The northeastern states also suffered casualties. Pennsylvania reported 19 deaths with 14 deaths in New York state.

Australian referendum delayed

FROM ROBERT COCKBURN IN SYDNEY

PAUL Keating, the Australian prime minister, having won a mandate at the weekend to carry out his commitment to turn Australia into an independent republic, yesterday ruled out a referendum on the matter during his three years in office.

He has not, however, dismissed the possibility that the government will change the Australian flag, removing the Union Jack and leaving only the Southern Cross. The government has the legal power to change the flag.

The Australian Republican Movement sees Mr Keating's election as increasing the chances for the creation of a republic. He is perceived as one of the most powerful Labor politicians Australia has had and capable of carrying out all of his plans.

The author Thomas Kenally, who heads the Australian Republican Movement, said of Labor's election victory: "As much as the other side tried to separate the economies from the republic, the two are connected because the coming of the republic could be the end of the culture of dependence on other people which has marked Australia."

Professor Geoffrey Blainey, a principal speaker for the pro-monarchists, said yesterday that Mr Keating had decided to pick a team of people to redraft the constitution. "He will obviously pick people who will give him the kind of constitution he would like but the kind of constitution when it is placed before the people, the people of Australia may not like," he said.

At his first press conference since the election, Mr Keating was asked yesterday if the Queen had called to congratulate him. He smiled and said: "No, she hasn't rung."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Policeman sentenced to death for sex crimes

A MOROCCAN police commissioner was sentenced to death yesterday and 11 senior officers were jailed at the end of a sex crimes trial involving the coercion of more than 500 women and girls into violent sexual acts that were videotaped secretly (Christopher Walker writes).

During the hearing, one lawyer said that the 118 videos, some of which were screened in the Casablanca courtroom behind closed doors, were "not just pornographic but also horror films".

Hajj Muhammad Mustapha Tabet, 54, a chief police commissioner in charge of the special branch in a district of Casablanca, became a figure of national hatred during a month-long trial that has shaken the government and shocked the mainly Muslim country of 24 million people.

The court also sentenced Tabet's immediate superior, Ahmed Ouachi, to life imprisonment for trying to protect his subordinate.

Iran strikes hospital

Paris: Iranian warplanes bombed a French-run hospital in the Kurdish area of Iraq, killing at least six civilians, French charities and Danielle Minnerrand reported yesterday (Charles Bremner writes).

The French president's wife, who runs a human rights organisation, said that at least six Kurdish Iraqis died in the raids on the hospital at Raniya, near the Iranian frontier and inside the allied air-exclusion zone. The hospital is in an area controlled by the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan, a rebel group. The French staff were unharmful but have had to leave the area.

Staff mutiny halts paper

New York: A mutiny by staff, who tried to bring out their own edition, yesterday halted publication of the New York Post (James Bone writes).

Journalists rebelled after Abraham Hirschfeld, the paper's prospective buyer, announced plans to dismiss 272 workers and ordered the editor to leave the building. The Post has had financial problems for more than a decade.

Refugee plan

Geneva: Sadako Ogata, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, says that the repatriation from neighbouring countries of 1.3 million Mozambican refugees who fled civil war and famine will begin next month. (AFP)

The bear truth

Tokyo: When Yukio "Mr Snowman", at over 30 the oldest polar bear in Japan, died here its minders confirmed what they had long suspected: the animal was not male, but female. (Reuters)

Siege of religious cult draws the profit motive

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN WACO

THE siege of a heavily armed religious cult in the heart of Texas presents a peculiarly American spectacle as it draws into its sixteenth day. At the centre are the 105 cult followers waiting for Armageddon, surrounded by them are at least 400 armed and frustrated federal agents and encircling them in turn are thousands of entrepreneurs eager to cash in on the strangest and most marketable story of the year.

David Koresh, the cult's fanatical leader, is disgruntled at the way his unfinished saga is being used for the gain of others. "He takes great offence [at] the making of money out of this tragedy," the FBI announced.

He is particularly piqued by the fact that his mother,

Bonnie Haldeman, has sold her film rights to the story for \$75,000 (£54,000). According to the Los Angeles film agents, cruising Waco like well-dressed barmaids, Mrs Haldeman was dithered.

Part of Mr Koresh's outrage may stem from the news that he, too, has been offered a film contract, to which he has not responded, while in Oklahoma. The NBC television network has already commenced the construction of a set for *Ranch Apocalypse, the Movie*. Filming is due to start at the end of next month, whether or not the siege is over.

But the film agents, the cartoon crows of every American tragedy, are out alone in eying the Mount Carmel compound for profit. On Sun-

day, the observation point near the compound more closely resembled a country fair, as the public flocked to watch the activity: one step ahead of them came the entrepreneurs. Here you could buy a "Koresh-burger" or a baseball cap with a new explanation for Waco: "We Ain't Coming Out".

In the space of two weeks, Waco has become a magnet for neo-Nazis, the Ku Klux Klan, Bible bashers, libertarians, cranks, gun enthusiasts and lawyers, a motley group divided on every possible issue except their desire to appear on national television.

But the one person who has done most to turn the siege into a public relations fiesta is Mr Koresh. Finding himself cut off from the outside



Koresh: mother has sold film rights

world, he has taken to communicating directly with the media by means of sheets hung from the compound windows. The latest reads: "FBI broke negotiations. We

want press." The FBI's tacticians are now plainly focused on using Mr Koresh's vanity to wrinkle him out of the compound. At every press conference, like a mantra, Bob Ricks, the FBI special agent whose unenviable task it is to put a public face on the authorities' negotiations, announces that if Mr Koresh surrenders, the judicial system will provide him with more publicity than he has ever had. More impressively, he says it with a straight face.

Dick Swensen, of the FBI, said that Kathy Schroeder, 34, who was released last weekend, had identified a dead body in the compound. The FBI said the next-of-kin had not been informed, but that the person was not British.

هكلمة الزمان

THE TIMES TUESDAY MARCH 16 1993

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The American WW

Susan Kent
American Airlines Flight Attendant



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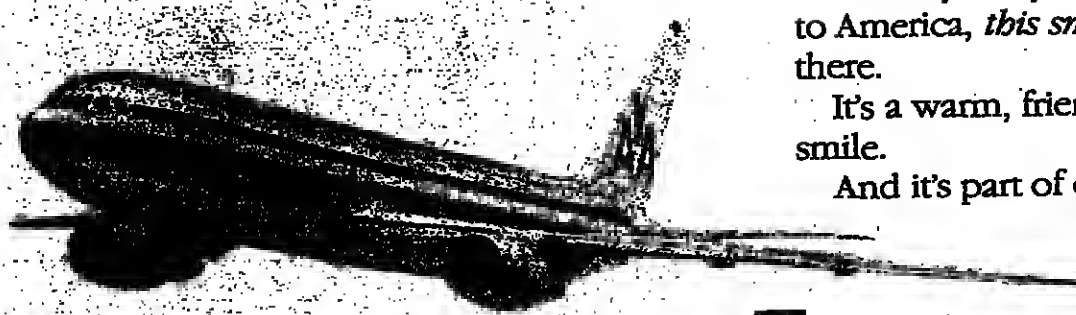
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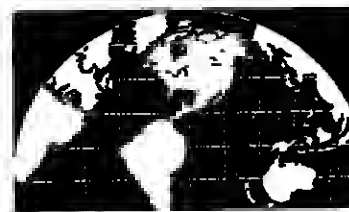


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Delors to meet Clinton for pre-trade war negotiations

■ If this week's talks fail, Mickey Kantor, the US trade representative, seems all too ready to push Europe and America to the brink of a trade war, and perhaps beyond

FROM GEORGE BROCK IN BRUSSELS

HASTILY arranged talks in Washington on Thursday between President Clinton and Jacques Delors, president of the European Commission, were announced last night as Community officials began preparing counter-measures against new trade sanctions that may be imposed by America next week.

Sir Leon Brittan, the EC trade commissioner, returned to Brussels last night to decide the Twelve's reply to the threat of punitive tariffs on European exports of equipment for public services and utilities, after last-minute negotiations were abruptly cancelled last weekend. EC officials are adjusting to the shock of discovering that Mr Clinton's new trade negotiators seem ready to push Europe and America to the brink of a trade war and perhaps beyond. They fear that other transatlantic trade talks may unravel in the worsening atmosphere.

The souring of the transatlantic trade dialogue caught Brussels by surprise. A looming trade war finds the EC with respectable arguments on many trade questions but politically incoherent: the Community's main governments are in trouble at home and divided over a joint trade strategy.

Officials working for Sir Leon have done their utmost since January to give their American counterparts time to find their way around the tangled skein of talks on anything from corn gluten to Airbus.

Harsh words from new Clintonites were dismissed at first as errors of inexperience or as the automatic operation of dispute machinery set in motion by the Bush administration. When that pacific reasoning was undermined by a stream of uncompromisingly tough rhetoric from Mr Clinton downwards, Sir Leon's officials cautioned that actions were more important than words. "Whatever we do, we are not talking the language of retaliation," one of Sir Leon's assistants said yesterday, adding that "the risk of a war of words becoming a war of deeds is enormous".

The contrast between this tip-toeing prudence in Brussels and the cavalier aggression of Mickey Kantor, the US trade representative, is stark. Mr Kantor's chief negotiator called his boss last Friday for last-minute instructions before flying to Brussels for talks, due to take place yesterday, on the dispute over public procurement. The American attack is directed at Article 29 of the EC's recent directive on the purchase of telecommunications and other equipment for public services which discriminates in favour of European suppliers.

Mr Kantor asked if the EC had scrapped Article 29. On being told that the offending clause was only up for discussion at the meeting, Mr Kantor cancelled the talks without consulting Sir Leon or anyone else in Brussels.

Mr Kantor may hold the title of ambassador, but he has no taste for diplomacy. He is now within days of triggering punitive sanctions that will start a tit-for-tat trade war. Washington's deadline for either a settlement or the start of retaliation measures is next Monday. Sir Leon has the pace of a straightaway political judgment to make: how long can he afford to smile and talk the language of conciliation?

French politicians of all parties think that Sir Leon is wasting his time talking peace when he should be preparing the EC for war. The advent of the Clinton administration in Washington and tough talk on trade has fired up French resentment of America once again, and already shifted the delicate balance of power inside the Community on trade issues.

Last autumn, France was on the defensive and isolated as the EC moved, sluggishly and late, towards a deal on farm subsidies with Washington which should have unblocked the entire six-year world trade negotiation in Geneva. France is now on the attack.



Heading for an exit: Romanians crowding around the gates of the Argentine embassy in Bucharest yesterday after Buenos Aires announced it would be issuing immigration visas. More than 250,000 people have left Romania since the bloody overthrow of communism in 1989

Power struggle deepens

Weakened Yeltsin runs out of options

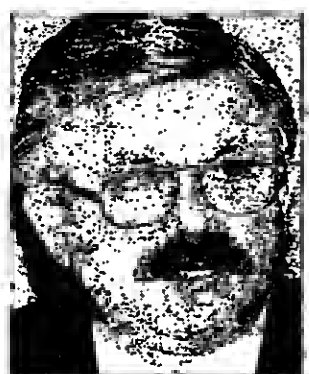
FROM ANNE McELVOY IN MOSCOW AND MICHAEL BINYON IN BONN

PRESIDENT Yeltsin yesterday accused Russia's Congress of People's Deputies of seeking to restore communist rule and endangering order in the state by its attempts to slow the pace of reform and prevent a referendum to resolve the constitutional crisis.

"The outcome of the work of the eighth congress inspires deep apprehension," Mr Yeltsin said in a statement released through Vyacheslav Kostikov, his spokesman. "His decisions have seriously worsened the imbalance of power and endangered the country's stability." The declaration gave no hint of what steps Mr Yeltsin intends to take to combat the diminishing of his authority by the congress, which ended its most aggressive session yet on Saturday by rejecting the president's proposals for power-sharing and vetoing the referendum he intends to hold at the end of next month.

Mr Yeltsin seems unsure of his next move and the delay in

announcing his response to the defeat at the hands of the legislature further weakens his position. There has been a flurry of statements from the president and his aides con-



Rutskoi: supporters seek share of power

demning the congress's obstinacy but the rhetoric cannot conceal the fact that the presidency is running out of options. There was some cheer for Mr Yeltsin last night when

he won support from Helmut Kohl, the German chancellor. Herr Kohl threw his country's political and economic weight behind Mr Yeltsin in an attempt to strengthen the Russian leader in his battle with his parliamentary opponents. The chancellor issued a declaration saying that Mr Yeltsin's reform policies "lie as much in the interests of Russia and its people as in the interests of all other countries". The president's policies had strengthened trust throughout the world in Russian policy, and this had led to greater international security.

Herr Kohl gave a warning that Mr Yeltsin and his policies were being threatened by people "who want to stop the internal reform process in Russia". He insisted that the West and especially the Group of Seven industrialised countries had repeatedly underlined their interest in the reform process.

The Russian leader wants to

press ahead with a referendum without the backing of congress but it is unlikely that the constitutional court to whom such a project would be referred to determine its legality would support him. Valeri Zorkin, the court's chairman, has spoken out against a referendum, saying that it would dangerously divide Russia.

In an indication of a new strategy from Russia's "centrist" forces, Oleg Rumyantsev, chairman of the constitutional commission, called for early elections for both president and parliament as the only way out of the conflict. Mr Rumyantsev demanded that Mr Yeltsin share his powers with Aleksandr Rutskoi, the vice-president, a supporter of Civic Union and its probable candidate when presidential elections are held. "This would allow economic reform to proceed on the basis of consensus", he said.

Health care, page 17

Italians question liberal

FROM JOHN PHILLIPS IN ROME

THE leader of the Italian Liberal Party was placed under investigation yesterday, reviving pressure on the fragile government coalition on the eve of the official start today of the campaign for Italy's electoral reform referendum.

Judges in Milan said that they had advised Renato Altissimo that he faced potential proceedings in connection with an illegal payment made by a shipping company in Genoa. The holding, Signor Altissimo, who enjoys a reputation as a fun-loving devotee of Rome piano bars and night clubs, was one of seven parliamentarians to be placed under enquiry for the first time yesterday by the judges heading "Operation Clean Hands".

The development marked the first major involvement in the scandal of the liberals, one of the four parties in the coalition of the prime minister, Giuliano Amato. Signor Altissimo will now come under pressure to resign, creating further embarrassment in the ranks of the government, which faces a possible confidence vote at the end of a debate on corruption in the Chamber of Deputies today.

The latest setback for the government comes as campaigning starts for the electoral reform referendum, that party leaders hope will provide a way out of the scandal.

The vote to be held on April 18 on ending the proportional representation system is expected to be followed by an early general election, either in the autumn with a radically reformed system if the result is "yes" or sooner under the old rules if Italians reject moving toward a two-party system. A "no" vote would accentuate the existing tendency to fractured parliaments and instability, plunging the country into still deeper chaos, political experts say.

A similar referendum in June 1991 on reforming the existing voting system received overwhelming support.

Old-boy network bound to win

FROM CHARLES BREMMER IN PARIS

PRESIDENT Mitterrand will not decide for two more weeks whom he wants to appoint as prime minister. As the French general election enters its first round on Sunday, however, the country already knows one big feature in the next prime minister's biography: his mind was honed at the Ecole Nationale de l'Administration, the country's most distinguished college.

Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and Jacques Chirac, the chiefs of the conservative UDF and RPR parties, as well as Edouard Balladur, the Gaullist mandarin whom M Chirac wants to take the prime minister's job, all studied at the school, the postgraduate nursery of the civil service and political top brass.

If the UDF scores better than the Gaullist RPR on March 28 and M Mitterrand wants to stir up trouble, he might choose François Léotard, the centrist young Turk. But the école old-boys' association need not worry. M Léotard, too, is an "enarque", along with the lion's share of the leading lights in all the country's principal political parties.

Although derided for years by comedians as supercilious and out of touch, the intellectually super-charged "enarque" technocrats have come in the 1990s to exercise an unprecedented grasp on the levers of the French state.

The voters might think they are ejecting the discredited Socialist "mafia" which has run the country for most of the past 12 years, but they are really only replacing one band of "enarques" with brothers and a few sisters from the same tiny caste. The last conservative government in the late 1980s and the present Socialist one have each numbered a dozen or so "enarque" ministers. Comparisons with Oxford and Cambridge, Har-



vard or Yale are misleading. The school, founded in 1945 by Michel Debré, the Gaullist prime minister, turns out only 100 graduates a year.

Brice Lalonde, leader of one wing of the Ecology coalition, says: "They are all part of a little nobility which runs this country like a private fief. We need some Robin Hoods to open up this little band of diplomats." His green group are scoring their healthy 15 or so per cent of the electoral support not so much because of their love of the environment as their stance as outsiders battling an entrenched ruling class typified by the "enarques".

A fine illustration of the system came last week. M Lalonde said. After the disclosure that M Mitterrand's staff had been bugging telephones illegally, he had tried to find out who was ultimately responsible. Gilles Ménage and Louis Schweitzer, former chiefs of cabinet of M Mitterrand and Laurent Fabius, the prime minister of the time, are now serving as chiefs of EDF, the state electricity monopoly, and Renault, the state-owned motor firm. Of course, both are "enarques".

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Danes urged to back Maastricht

FROM CHRISTOPHER FOLLETT IN COPENHAGEN

POUL Nyrup Rasmussen, the Danish prime minister, launched the ruling Social Democratic party's campaign for the second Maastricht referendum in May with a call yesterday for a clear "yes" vote to prevent Denmark being isolated from Europe. He declared: "We cannot stand alone with our back turned against Europe."

Danish voters will decide on May 18 whether to accept a revised deal on the Maastricht treaty, agreed with Copenhagen's European Community partners at the Edinburgh summit in December, which allows the country to opt out of a common currency and joint defence policy.

One of the main themes of Mr Rasmussen's campaign will be that the Edinburgh deal keeps Denmark out of all the moves towards European

union which many Danes object, while emphasising the importance that continued full EC membership would have on Denmark's economic future. Seven of the eight parties in the Danish parliament are to campaign for the Edinburgh deal, and all opinion polls are pointing towards a "yes" result.

Support is falling slightly though, with a poll in the financial daily *Børsen* showing 53 per cent of Danes in favour, 31 per cent against, and 16 per cent undecided on the Maastricht treaty. The survey also suggested that, while 43 per cent of Social Democrats would support the deal, 40 per cent remained opposed.

"I intend to put all my personal prestige behind getting a clear majority of Social Democrats to vote with a

resounding 'yes' in the referendum. The result will be a clear 'yes' on the day," Mr Rasmussen said.

The leader of the Social Democrats, Denmark's biggest party, formed a four-party centre-left coalition in January after the collapse of the ten-year-old Conservative-Liberal government over a refugee scandal.

Social Democratic voters tipped the balance towards a 51 per cent "no" last June by ignoring their leaders' advice in the first referendum to back the Maastricht treaty on closer European political and economic union.

Mr Rasmussen welcomed the weekend decision of the left-wing Socialist People's party to change tack and campaign for a "yes".

Leading article, page 19

Kohl's austerity package brings hint of spring

BY MICHAEL BINYON

HELMUT Kohl's coup de théâtre in snatching an eleven-hour victory from the complex negotiations on an austerity package has sent a springtime surge of confidence through Germany. Many people hope the chancellor's masterstroke will swiftly be translated into a cut in interest rates, an economic revival and an end to a long winter of political bickering and stalemate.

Politicians of all persuasions yesterday praised Herr Kohl's skill in piloting the "solidarity pact" through the bitter arguments that have paralysed Bonn for the past four months and cast doubts on the government's ability to meet the political and economic challenges of unification.

Few newspapers doubted yesterday that the widespread acceptance of a pack-

age that will ensure an annual flow of DM110 billion (£46 billion) to eastern Germany, while not raising income tax until after next year's general election, will revive Herr Kohl's political standing and boost the chances of another victory by his Christian Democratic party next year.

The euphoria of the deal has, however, overshadowed the unresolved details of the package and masked doubts about its viability. Economists have pointed out that many of the figures do not add up: that there is very little economising in government expenditure, that much depends on a swift revival of business confidence, and that the economic consolidation package must now be matched by restraint in wage rises, a boost in investment, success in combating fraudulent claims for unemployment benefit, and continued



Kohl: hopes high for interest-rate cut

co-operation between the Christian Democrat-led government and the 16 Länder, mostly governed by the Social Democrats.

The first key reaction will be that of the Bundesbank, which was generally assumed to be waiting for agreement on the package before risking additional in-

terest-rate cuts. The government, which has no control over the central bank's policies, now hopes to see rates cut on Thursday.

The weekend agreement has two main political results. The first is a long-term strengthening of the individual states vis-à-vis the federal government in Bonn. The decision to reapportion value-added tax revenues from 1995, raising the Länder's share from 37 to 44 per cent, will give them greater fiscal independence and make it easier for eastern states to catch up with the west. The second result is a new sense of purpose in Bonn to combat the general disillusion with politics and a sense of powerlessness in the face of Germany's need to adapt to a world role. This is important in the attempt to create confidence to overcome the recession. Tyl Necker, president of the Federation of

German Industry, said the deal would reassure the business sector that the political establishment was capable of decision-making.

Herr Kohl wants to take advantage of this to speed up implementation of tougher restrictions on asylum-seekers and to force agreement on the deployment of German troops for international peacekeeping. The need to halt the continuing flood of asylum-seekers was underlined by a dramatic appeal to Bonn at the weekend from the authorities in Rostock, where the situation is said to be explosive and there are fears of new racial riots.

With more than 1,400 people arriving in the city one weekend, most of them Romanians smuggled across the border from Poland, the asylum hostels are full and the would-be immigrants are being housed in tents in fields.

Morillon to return to Srebrenica as medical teams tell of suffering in Muslim enclave

UN general leaves siege town to meet Serb leader

FROM TIM JUDAH IN BELGRADE

LIEUTENANT General Philippe Morillon yesterday left the besieged Muslim town of Srebrenica, where he has set up camp, to meet General Ratko Mladic, the Bosnian Serb military leader, but was expected to return last night. Lt Gen Morillon, the commander in chief of United Nations forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina, stunned and angered Serb leaders on Saturday when he announced that he would remain in the Muslim town until they permitted aid to get through, the wounded to be evacuated and military observers to be stationed in the town. The Serbian media is still insisting that Lt Gen Morillon is a prisoner in Srebrenica. However, UN staff and workers with the French medical charity, Médecins sans Frontières, who were in the enclave with him were giving graphic and moving accounts yesterday.

Mr Jolles said that initially the Srebrenica authorities had tried to stop Lt Gen Morillon leaving but when they consented to his departure, women and children blocked his path, beseeching him not to go. "They were frightened," Many of them, he said, were refugees from places where UN forces had visited and which had been shelled by Serbs after they had left. Lt Gen Morillon then made his dramatic decision to stay. "Within an hour they had cleaned out the post office. Then he went to the window and told the people: 'I won't abandon you'. There was a ceremony, and the UN flag was raised. Local leaders said if Morillon succeeded in saving them they would rename the town Morillongrad."

Simon Mardel, a British doctor with the World Health Organisation, said in Zagreb that numerous Muslim civilians were dying from starvation or wounds from Serb artillery attacks. He said that the torment and carnage he saw in a week in Srebrenica and Konjevic Polje surpassed his previous experiences in Ethiopia, Liberia and Afghanistan. "We were traumatised by what we saw. We were very sad to go because we felt we were leaving these people to an almost certain fate," he said at the weekend.

In Srebrenica he examined 96 patients — amputees, paraplegics, those suffering from chest and face wounds — crammed into 14 cold rooms of a maternity ward, all of whom had been operated on without anaesthetic. "Most had severe infections and there was a considerable smell of necrotic [dead] tissue in every room. There was no penicillin whatsoever." Many residents were reduced to eating a crude bread made from grinding down the cores of corn cobs, mixed with buds from branches and berries from which tea was brewed. "The corn cores were causing a lot of abdominal pain and some patients told me people had died from it," Dr Mardel added.

Prince's visit, page 1

Commander plays hand with finesse

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

AMID the slaughter and horror of Bosnia, it is not unusual to find men with a mission. On the one hand, there are evil men with a mission for killing, local warlords who incite their supporters to murder and rape to gain hegemony over their slice of Bosnia.

On the other, there are men like the French commander, Lieutenant General Philippe Morillon, whose mission is to stop the bloodshed and to save the lives of civilians targeted by the guns, hundreds of whom are now dying of starvation and war injuries.



Morillon: diplomacy among the savagery

in towns besieged by the Serbs in eastern Bosnia-Herzegovina. Lt Gen Morillon has been the commander of the United Nations forces in Bosnia since last October.

There are many soldiers among the 7,000 UN personnel in Bosnia who have seen babies staked to posts, women with their breasts sliced off and men with limbs severed. The UN commander has seen such sights and yet he has to deal diplomatically with the military commanders who must take ultimate responsibility for these acts

of savagery. His decision to commit himself to Srebrenica, refusing to move out until the Serbs allow food convoys through to the dying Muslim population, is typical of the man.

Lt Gen Morillon's stated mission is to mastermind the distribution of food and medicine by road convoy to the victims of the war. A military plan was drawn up to carry this out. It involves the planned distribution of 235 tonnes of aid a day to the Bijac area, 235 tonnes to Banja Luka, 90 to Mostar, 350 to the Vitez area, 350 to Sarajevo, and 245 tonnes to eastern Bosnia.

However, as General Mackenzie found, the job entails far more than supervising the delivery of food parcels. Every day, Lt Gen Morillon is engaged in sensitive peace negotiations which demand the brinkmanship qualities of the most astute poker player.

There are times when this former platoon leader in the French Foreign Legion and tank battalion commander erupts in frustration when he feels he is getting nowhere. When he first arrived in Bosnia, he wanted to save Sarajevo. His vision was to demilitarise the Bosnian capital. So far, the UN chief has failed.

Now, with the focus of attention switching from Sarajevo to eastern Bosnia, the French commander, 57, has set up a temporary base in the post office at Srebrenica. Yesterday, he arranged to meet Lieutenant General Ratko Mladic, the Serb commander, in a location a few miles from Srebrenica to negotiate aid, before returning to the besieged town.



Calm influence: a Belgrade policeman placating an angry customer, one of many who blocked streets yesterday in a bid to withdraw their money after the bank's owner fled the country

Food parcels just miss family home

FROM JOEL BRAND IN GORAZDE

MEHMED Polutak, 70, and his son, Jus, were the first Gorazde residents to see the parcels of food and medicines dropped from 10,000ft by the American operation to bring relief aid to eastern Bosnia.

Just after midnight last week, Mehmed awoke to the drone of what he knew was an American plane. He woke up Jus, 34, and they went outside to peer into the dark.

First they heard the dull thuds of parcels hitting the snow-covered ground in the woods above the village. The Polutaks live three miles outside Gorazde, an industrial and agricultural community of 50,000 people cut off from food and aid for ten months.

Then there was what seemed to be an explosion. "It hit so hard that I thought it was a shell," said Mehmed, smiling, standing next to the twisted heap of American army rations a few hours after it landed. The parachute of the last parcel to drop had failed to open properly and the food crashed down, just behind their small home, demolish-

ing a few tree branches and a clothes line. "I saw something dark fly off and hit the barn and I told my son, 'The bastards are bombing us!'" If the parcel had travelled another ten yards it would have destroyed the house, probably killing everyone in it.

The half-tonne parcel contained hundreds of meals ready-to-eat, American military rations, most of which exploded on impact. Service-green tubes of peanut butter and spaghetti with meatballs, among others dishes, broke open, creating a foul-smelling mess. It was not exactly what the Polutak family and the growing throng of neighbours had expected, but it was enough.

For the first two weeks of the American operation, the people of this besieged Muslim community in eastern Bosnia-Herzegovina waited anxiously for the C130 cargo planes to help them in their fight against starvation and to prove that the world had not forgotten them. Now they knew it had not.

Who loved you when you had no hair, no teeth, no manners and no volume control?

Send her a card for Mother's Day. March 21st.

The governors wanted a change — but Westminster's controversial head was not going to be forced out without a fight. **John Rae** concludes his series with a tale of intrigue in the common room

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Is breast screening worth the worry?

Aileen Ballantyne on new doubts about the wisdom of X-raying women under 50 for breast cancer

Leading British breast cancer specialists are to meet in private this month to review the future of one of the world's largest and most controversial medical trials. The £4 million ten-year trial, being funded by the British government and British cancer research charities, is aimed at weighing the value of potentially life-saving benefits of breast cancer screening against the harm such screening causes in terms of increased anxiety and unnecessary investigative surgery.

The move, which may lead to the abandonment of the recently started British trial, involving 200,000 healthy women aged 40 to 50, follows a specially convened workshop of international cancer specialists in Bethesda, Washington last month, sponsored by the US National Cancer Institute (NCI). They concluded that new analyses of several studies from around the world, involving about 500,000 women, have failed to show that women under 50 benefit from mammogram X-rays.

The workshop, whose full conclusions will be published on Thursday, found that in studies which followed women in their forties for five to seven years there was no reduction in deaths from breast cancer among those who were screened compared with unscreened women of the same age. Even when the same exercise was carried out for ten to 12 years, they found that the reduction in deaths in the screened groups were "uncertain, and at best marginal".

The findings, which are being reported to President Clinton's special commission on cancer this month, mean that many American women in their forties, told by cancer specialists for the last decade that they should pay for a regular mammogram in order to prevent death from breast cancer, are now seriously questioning that advice.

According to some of Britain's cancer specialists, the estimated 10,000 women in their forties now paying for private screening for breast cancer every year should also

think seriously about its possible ill-effects before they proceed, as the harm may outweigh the proven benefits.

Professor Michael Baum, who chairs the therapeutic breast cancer trials section of the government's main cancer research advisory group, the UK Co-ordinating Committee on Cancer Research (UKCCCR), says that on the basis of the available evidence, offering such tests to women under 50 in the private sector is a "questionable practice".

He emphasises that in this age group women have as much chance of being harmed as helped by screening because there is a high possibility of borderline diagnoses. "I see many women for a second opinion where the mammogram is equivocal and the radiologists cannot make up their minds whether to do something or not," he says. "She is told to return for another mammogram in six months, and for that six months the woman lives in fear."

For women under 50, who are not at present offered screening on the NHS in Britain unless recruited for the current trial, the chances of such borderline diagnoses appear to be considerably higher than for older women. One reason for this is that the breasts of pre-menopausal women are far less translucent, giving a cloudy, harder-to-read image - on a mammogram. There is also a far higher chance that, even after she proceeds to a biopsy under general anaesthetic, a lump will turn out to be harmless.

Although there is also a risk of unnecessary investigations, for women over 50, cancer specialists can say with confidence that such risks are likely to be worthwhile: large-scale studies have shown that screening leads to a 25-30 per cent reduction in deaths from cancer. But for younger women there is no such proof.

In the absence of any proven reduction in death rates, all a woman may be gaining from having her cancer found early, according to Professor Baum,



Detail from *La Madeleine* by Titian. The anxiety X-rays can cause in younger women may outweigh the benefits

professor of surgery at the Royal Marsden Hospital, London, is more "cancer knowledge" years. "This means she may have to live longer with the 'cancer' label for no proven benefit," he says. It may also make it difficult for a woman to get life insurance.

Mr Ian Fentiman, consultant surgeon and deputy director of the Imperial Cancer Research Fund's clinical oncology unit at Guy's Hospital, estimates that for women under 50, the chances of having a cancer picked up by screening is only about one in 1,000. Against this, there is about a one in 10 chance of being recalled for further anxiety-inducing investigations, for a lump or cyst which will usually be benign.

For about one in 200 women, these investigations lead to a biopsy: the surgical removal of a small part of tissue from the lump. In women over 50, who reach this stage of investigation, only about three out of ten such lumps are harmless, with the remaining seven being cancerous. But for women under 50

who reach this stage, three out of four lumps are benign. Mr Fentiman concludes that private screening for women under 50 is just "putting money in people's pockets".

But Dr Pat Last, consultant in women's health at Bupa and an observer on the government's advisory committee on breast cancer screening, says that the decision to have a mammogram or not is entirely a matter of personal choice. "We still don't know enough about how cancer develops, but we still believe that the earlier you can pick it up the better." Every year, in England and Wales alone, there are more than 3,300 new cases of breast cancer in women aged 40 to 50, she said. Of these, 1,891 occurred in the 45-49 age group, only slightly fewer than the 2,050 which occur in the 50-54 group. "There is very little difference between the two groups, so why screen one and not the other?" she asked.

Professor Howard Cuckle, a leading epidemiologist, who chairs the working party on the under-fifties breast cancer

screening trial, says similar changes were levelled at breast cancer screening for the over-fifties until the benefits could be proven. Despite evidence from other trials, he argues the need to carry out the British one because, unlike the others, it is specifically designed to find out whether there is an improved survival rate for women in their forties or not.

"The death of a woman in her forties from cancer is an enormous tragedy. If there is any way we can avoid these deaths we have to pursue it. If

we don't continue with this trial we will never find the answer," he said.

About 50,000 women in Britain are already on the trial, which offers screening to one third, with the other two thirds as a non-screened control group. The future of the trial will be decided within the next six months, following the recommendations of the advisory group. But Professor Baum believes that if women weigh up all the facts, not enough will volunteer for the trial for it to go ahead.

By the pricking of my thumbs

Are doctors and nurses likely to give you Aids, asks Thomas Stuttaford

In the past a patient suffering from a frozen shoulder may have been reluctant to go to the doctor's surgery and risk catching flu in the waiting room. Now he may fear that the doctor rather than his coughing neighbour in the queue is the peril and that he might pick up HIV or hepatitis B or C. But these are blood-borne diseases and unless the patient has had invasive procedures and the doctor was bleeding, there is no risk at all of any of these infections being spread during a consultation.

The danger from an invasive procedure is that the doctor might have cut or pricked himself with a needle or scalpel through his gloves, and blood could then have seeped into the patient's wound. Hepatitis B, (and probably hepatitis C) are highly infectious and have been spread in this way. HIV is not easily transmitted and there is no known case in which it has been spread by a surgeon.

Patients of the doctors and nursing staff who have died of Aids must be wondering what the term "invasive procedure" actually means. The answer is that any surgical procedure is invasive. If there is cutting or stitching and sharp instruments have been involved, there is a risk of contamination from the doctor's blood. Nor does the specialty matter: general surgery, midwifery, gynaecology and orthopaedics all involve the use of cutting instruments and invasive procedures. The Kent midwife, who was HIV positive, must have carried out episiotomies, and stitched up the cuts in torn muscles. The casualty officers who have been HIV positive are likely to have carried out minor surgical procedures.

If an infected doctor stitched a superficial skin wound, such as a cut on the hand from a kitchen knife, or a bite from the rotweiler next door, would this be invasive? It does not sound so but, however simple a procedure, it is invasive because the skin surface, or mucus membrane, has been breached. If any of the doctor's blood from a nick from a needle or scalpel dripped into the wound, infection could

theoretically occur. It is a most unlikely scenario for HIV, but just possible enough to give rise to "a negligible risk" of infection does, however, occur as a result of surgery by doctors who have been carrying hepatitis B and many cases are on record.

In the operating theatre, injuries to the doctors with needles are common. A former president of the Royal College of Surgeons told *The Times* at the start of the HIV epidemic a few years ago that only rarely did he operate without pricking himself. The surgeon was at the top of his profession: a really ham-fisted houseman can prick his finger just putting up a drip.

Dental surgery is invasive. Dentists use drills, needles and scalpels and they, like doctors, should always wear gloves. Although some X-ray and investigative procedures are thought of, and referred to, as invasive they are not invasive in terms of the spread of HIV. Patients who have undergone normal physical examinations, even of an intimate nature such as rectal or vaginal examinations, need have no worries at all; they are not even liable to "a negligible risk". The cystoscopy, sigmoidoscopy, colonoscopy and iridoscopy will not spread HIV. The instruments are now rigorously sterilised and the procedures carry no risk of infection.

Until the 1960s, general practitioners did their own minor surgery but since then they have tended to wield the prescription pen rather than the cutting scalpel. Now, in Virginia Bottomley's reformed NHS, GPs are again performing surgery and are having to learn old skills. This makes it difficult for an HIV infected doctor to continue in general practice, as well as in the surgical specialities in hospital.

The doctor who listens to and taps your chest, peels down your throat and looks into your ears or who takes your smear or feels your prostate will never give you anything more sinister than a cold or flu.

Perk up, you're in Russia

Raisa Gorbachev is said by her husband to be very ill. Will she still get the best treatment?

Mikhail Gorbachev was comfortably settled to give one of his regular snugg TV interviews on the woe of his old rival Boris Yeltsin last week when the interviewer enquired about the report that his wife Raisa had been admitted to the Archangelsk Hospital, outside Moscow, with hypertension and a second mild stroke. "The VIP hospital that is," added the unsparing interviewer.

The former Soviet leader was taken aback. "How did you know?" he sputtered and then mumbled about Raisa needing special treatment for a complex condition. Lots of Russians need special treatment for complex conditions but now, as before, the rich and the *nomenklatura* have the only reliable chance of getting it.

The sight of a former president being quizzed about his wife's preferential medical treatment in a society where privilege was ingrained but never openly acknowledged would have been impossible two years ago. Raisa's mistake was to wear her privilege on her Yves St Laurent sleeve. In her open espousal of good living, foreign travel and pleasure, she took glasnost to its logical conclusion. But for women whose lives consisted of holding down a job, doing all the housework and spending some eight hours a week standing in queues this was one openness too far and they have never forgiven her.

The collapse of communism has relegated the Gorbachevs to the status of ill-loved has-beens but despite the resentment heaped on the old elite their privileges remain largely intact. The ritual stripping of perks which followed the revo-

lution of 1989 in Eastern Europe has not taken place in Russia. The Writers' Union, literary lapdog of the regime, still has its luxury dachas; the Congress of People's Deputies would not consider sitting through Yeltsin-bashing sessions without three long breaks in the subsidised cafeterias dispensing rare delicacies.

Government officials and their families still have free access to the Kremlin's Hospital in Moscow with its plush red carpets, leather sofas and Western medical equipment. The status of its old customers is uncertain. The conservative parliament never got round to passing the promised legislation cutting health care and other privileges: it was too busy attempting to pass new laws guaranteeing deputies the right to buy government housing at absurdly low prices, until a newspaper campaign forced it to desist.

The Kremlovka, whose electric gates and high walls betray it as the medical fortress in which Brezhnev, Andropov and Chernenko were kept alive in their dotage, now takes paying patients so the seats of government Volgas have been replaced by the businessmen's BMWs. "We treat anyone who has the money to pay," says Dr Vladimir Sibirsky, head of

intensive care who once tended to the Politburo's ailments - they were deemed worthy of that department no matter how trivial their complaints.

"Obviously we do have our old patients but on a different basis," he says. He refuses to disclose what they pay or whether they have preferential access. "But if Mikhail Sergeevich and Raisa Maximovna turn up there is no question that they would be treated very politely."

Private health care is widespread in Russia these days, with hospitals operating unregulated market mechanisms. It is left to heads of departments what price they demand but the going rate in a decent clinic for a drug-assisted birth is 15,000 roubles (£25), two months' average salary. A bed costs 650 roubles (£1), but is usually only available for a much larger bribe. Poor and elderly Russians who cannot afford these prices are left to rely on the uninvitingly named "basic hospitals" where the waiting lists are lengthy, conditions often unhygienic and treatment a random affair.

The grandmother of one acquaintance died recently on a stretcher in the corridor of a Moscow hospital after a massive dose of the wrong drug. "They didn't even apologise,"

said her granddaughter. There is no system for complaints or legal redress in such circumstances.

Svetoslav Pyodorov, the eye surgeon renowned for his pioneering microtechnique, defends the principle of paying for medicine. "In a society as undeveloped as this, free services meant bad services. We need a market in the health service and elsewhere to introduce the idea of quality and responsibility." He charges 10,000 roubles (£16.50) for a basic operation but treats impoverished patients for nothing.

The runt Communist party betrays the end of free Soviet health care but like most of the regime's boasts, it was always hollow. Doctors were (and still are) badly paid and made up their salaries by taking bribes and gifts from patients in return for quicker treatment.

"The only difference," says Mr Pyodorov, "is that now we issue a bill and it's legal."

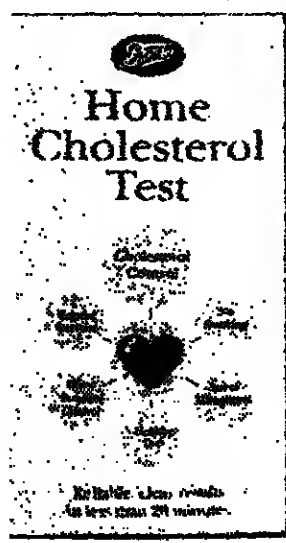
In spite of the changes few Westerners with a complaint of any seriousness would entrust themselves to even the best of Russian hospitals. I risked the Kremlovka and its bill of over £100 for an X-ray of my left ankle. The Röntgen machine to my great relief was German, the staff neat and the formalities by local standards extraordinarily smooth. There was a long and careful consultation with a sports doctor who seemed familiar with my particular complaint. Then I was ushered into the radiography room and positioned the wrong way up on the table. "Right hand, wasn't it?" said the nurse cheerfully. I booked a flight back to London the same afternoon.

ANNE MCELVOY

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Lynne Truss



Journalistic prurience and envy have kept the John Birt story running for so long

I have a very simple theory about why the John Birt story refuses to lie down. The answer is that journalists are utterly transfixed by it. Yes, Mr Birt's enemies are out to get him. Yes, Marmaduke Hussey's many detractors are making glorious hay while the sun shines. But quite honestly, if you wave a story about allowable expenses under the nose of anyone in the media world — especially an intriguingly itemised list for "entertainment", "wardrobe" and "secretarial assistance" — it has the effect of strange hypnotic music, entrancing them until they can think of little else.

Personally, I keep lapsing into a reverie about it, and then jerking back to consciousness with a strange cry of "Can I have a receipt please?". I doodle on my sales invoice duplicate book and stare into space. I want to know whether Mr Birt also claims "entertainment" against a big BBC expense account. I want to know why the corporation didn't notice it was paying him VAT.

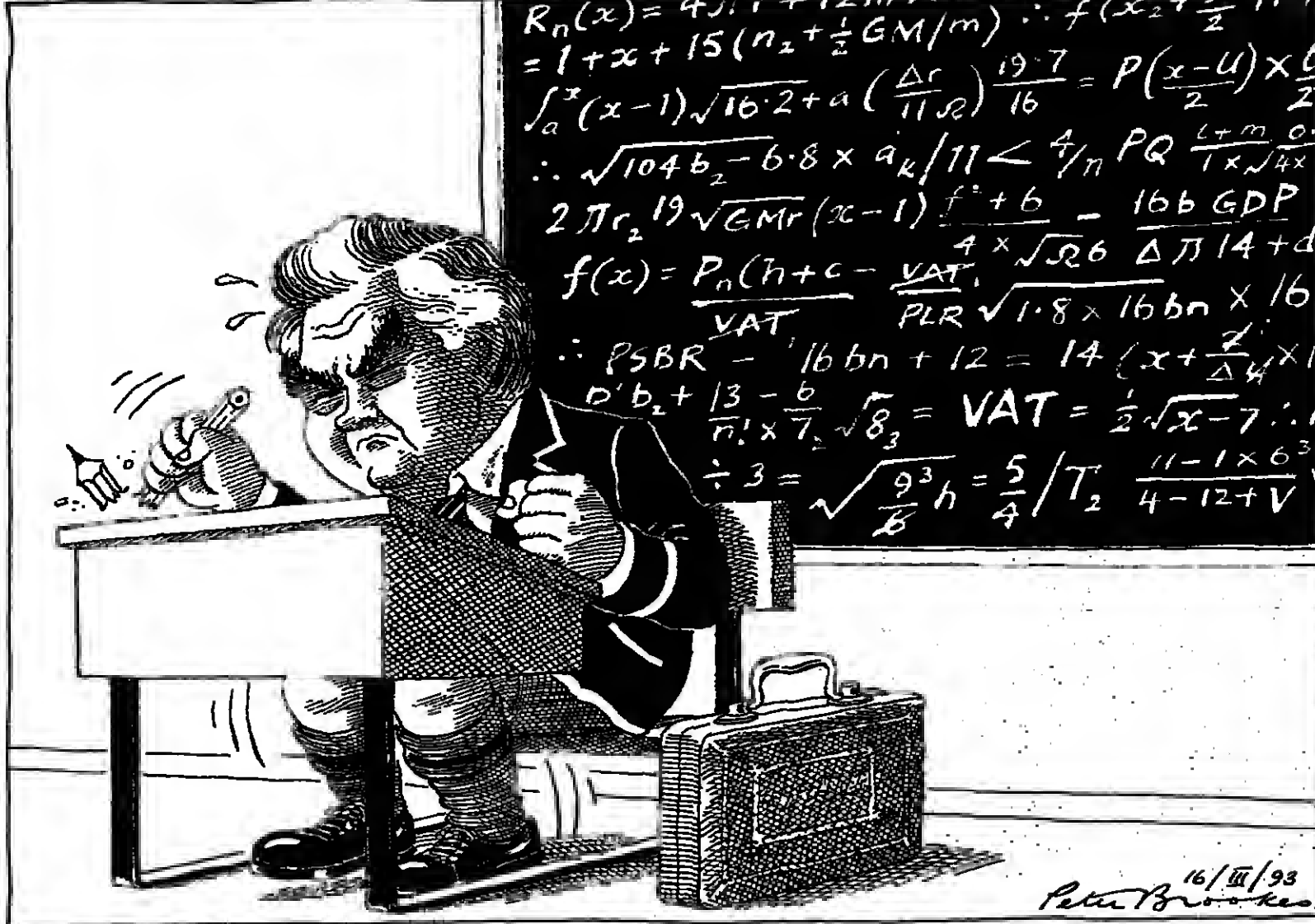
Allowable expenses are at the heart of the journalist's existence. The line between the business expense and the personal outgoing is fuzzy, wiggly and continually redrawn according to circumstance. "You could claim for those cats, you know," a professional colleague told me recently, to my surprise. "Cat food, vet's bills, the odd cat-nip toy with a bell on it. After all, let's face it, the cats are your primary raw material, you write about nothing else." Naturally I resented this slur, but I made a mental note to ring my accountant nevertheless, just in case a tax deductible cat was really a feasible proposition. I pictured the "feline maintenance" column in my big red Cathedral Analysts Book (is there VAT on cat-nip toys? or only on the little bells?) and reflected that I have wasted up considerably since going freelance. I remember an innocent time when I thought book-keeping was something to do with racehorses, and that double-entry meant having a porch at the front of your house.

What makes the John Birt story even more fascinating to Fleet Street journalists, of course, is that many of them have either worked at the BBC, or have heard ghastly stories about grown-up reporters claiming £2.36 for an evening meal. That Mr Birt, coming from commercial television, does not fit into the famous "BBC ethos" is no surprise, since it is all about paying people less than they are worth, and then depressing them further by implying that parsimony is its own reward. That ethos is about making office stationery so difficult to obtain that in the end you spend your own paltry net income on pots of glue. And it is also about confusing economy with meanness.

I know a woman who worked 39 loyal years in the BBC before being transferred to a satellite company. A bit upset about this unexpected discontinuity, she wrote to her personnel officer to ask whether her 40 years would still be recognised, and was deeply hurt to receive a letter saying yes. The BBC did award a gift of its own discretion to the attainer of 40 years' service, usually a TV worth £400. However, having considered her situation in all its many aspects, the BBC had decided that in a year's time it might award her a TV worth precisely £390 — though naturally it would go against the BBC ethos if she banked on it.

Sadly it turned out that I couldn't claim for the cats — not even under "entertainment". Well, easy come, easy go. Studying Mr Birt's 1991 expenses, however, I do spot a mysterious item called "depreciation" valued at £300, and wonder whether it is an allowance worth pursuing. Hard to put a figure on one's professional wear and tear, yet if he can do it, so can I. Perhaps you just calculate the number of brain cells destroyed by the aging process and then convert the answer into sterling. I don't dare telephone the accountant again, of course, in case he tells me it means something else.

As it is, I can ponder the mystery of why Mr Birt claimed such a small sum for depreciation in 1990 and 1991, when the BBC ethos is obviously all about depreciating people (even people who have served it for 39 years). And I can also consider the pleasant irony that, should Mr Birt really get the boot on Thursday, he will be able to claim it on his expenses.



NATIONAL TESTING

Dead dogma still barking

Marxism's will-o'-the-wisp has not only led many bright people astray, it has wasted their lives in solemn self-delusions

Not long ago, I had business in Boston, following my lifelong rule to read the newspapers wherever I am. I fell upon the *Boston Globe*, and was instantly rewarded by a story so hilarious and yet so touching, so absurd and yet so mournful, so untruthful and yet so pitiable, that I could not decide whether to laugh or weep, and finally settled for Shakespeare's suggestion, and read it again "with one auspicious and one dropping eye".

For the story was an account of a three-day conference that had just taken place on the hospitable campus of the University of Massachusetts, and its subject was, if you please, Marxism. What is more, no fewer than 500 "Marxist scholars and activists" had signed on for the whole course, so that counting short-term visitors the total score was 1,000. (Mind you, some must have come to catch a glimpse of a rival beast but the bronto's tail off, its thought processes were so slow that it would not know that it had lost its tail for a full half-hour.)

Appalling symbolism! For nothing has changed, not even the I-speak-your-weight language: hear Bertell Ollman, a professor of politics (well, it sure as hell couldn't be of English) at New York University.

It's definitely a down moment... people have taken the wrong lessons from the collapse of the so-called socialist systems, and that's propagated by the capitalist-owned media...

Professor Ollman, I should say, was banging a drum for his latest book, with the racy, rollicking title of *Dialectical Investigations*. Nor did that exhaust the fund of witty nomenclature being bandied about: Professor Stephen Cullenberg had chosen a real showstopper with the name of his magazine, *Rethinking Marxism*.

Professor Cullenberg, when the chuckles had died down, emphasised, in his comments on the former Soviet Union, that "We never endorsed that kind of Marxism, and for us, it's a kind of albatross that's been removed from our political and theoretical necks." (But of course, who would have thought otherwise? Indeed, I dreamed last night that there was a moving speech from Professor Cullenberg, recalling the astonishment he felt when he discovered, in 1989, that some — perhaps a good many — of the people sent to re-

education camps by Stalin had been treated not at all well; in the dream, this astonishment was widespread throughout the entire conference.)

The seminars, of which there were many, offered a varied menu; the one I wish I had supped at was "Archaeology and Marxism": was that, I wondered, the best time to go digging things up when burying would be much more suitable? Some, I was sorry to see, had begun to doubt altogether the relevance of Marxism. Professor Arndtson, for instance, said (not very coherently, I admit) that "Marxism has travelled around the world and exhausted a

volume, then handed the whole thing over to Engels, and washed his hands of the entire ridiculous caboodle, doing not a stroke of work ever again, and sponging off Engels to the end of his life. Yet the army of poodle-fakers that the mere word "Marxism" attracts all solemnly debate the blinding illumination that the book gave them.

But suppose someone, did, read, and understand the unreadable and unintelligible thing: what possible connection would it have with life at the end of the 20th century? Or any century, come to that at no time, from the day Engels wrote "The End", has the word "Marxism" had any relevance at all to anyone or anything, not even the poodle-fakers aforementioned.

Then whence the musty magnet that draws them? Some, I am sure, use it to ward off the danger of being attracted to real life. star — a religion, say — or to fill a general emptiness. To say "I am a nonentity" carries no weight; but to claim that "I am a Marxist" not only sounds powerful but persuades the bystanders that it is powerful, and therefore the claimant has power that non-Marxists do not have.

The portrait, too, has considerable force: that huge mound of hair and beard — by no means unattractive — is an image which, once seen, will last long on that inward retina where such apparently meaningful icons are found. (Did you know that he shaved off the entire beard not long before he died? Unfortunately, there is no photograph or portrait of the shorn pseudo-Samson.)

And yet, the professor and other riff-raff who contributed to the Boston *Macrafter* hardly touched upon what is the most extraordinary aspect of the whole absurd chimerical belief. In the 19th century, and the beginning of the 20th, the word Marxism was first used

as a theoretical policy, a structure for a different future for the huddled masses ("Workers of the world, unite — you have nothing to lose but your chains"), but as the century wore on, it was channelled into something utterly different from anything Marx or Marxists could recognise. From the moment that Lenin took total power in Russia, Marxism was abandoned there; and of course, when Stalin succeeded to the throne the entire remaining remnants of the musty philosophy were consigned to oblivion for ever.

Yet, as we know — and as very many dead millions of human beings could testify if they could be brought to life — the word Marxism was never out of the mouths of the Soviet tyrants and their sycophants, together with those who, in free countries, went a-whoring for the entire package.

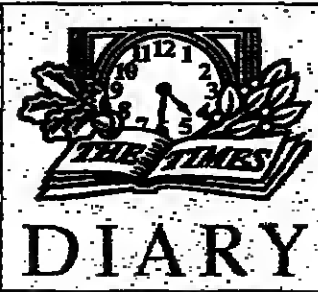
There was no need for socialism and communism to tag along with the word: both words can stand on their own feet, and both have the advantage of knowing that they are meaningful, which cannot be said of Marxism. Were those who professed socialism or communism just fishing about for something solidly ideological to buttress their watery beliefs? If so, since they could not read the Marxist scripture, they did not know that there was nothing in it, so they might just as well have gone on calling themselves socialists or communists.

Yet the solemn, empty, wasted conclave in Boston showed that even those who had wistfully declared Marxism clay-footed were reluctant to admit that they had been chasing, all their lives, a jack-o'-lantern, which had led them into the swamp of political nonsense from which no traveller returns.

True, it was hard for them to admit this, because it makes clear that the unreturning traveller has wasted his entire life. Who could be comfortable with that news? I can even sympathise with the fierce lady from Connecticut who demanded revolution and threatened fascism if she couldn't have it; at least she is going down with the ship.

But it is not necessary to go to Boston to find parallel absurdities; nor should we point the satirical finger too ostentatiously. Was I really the only person to burst out laughing at one of the greatest oxymorons ever penned? Well, I must be allowed to laugh again. Until 18 months ago, there was in Britain a magazine called, so help me, *Marxism Today*.

Bernard Levin



DIARY

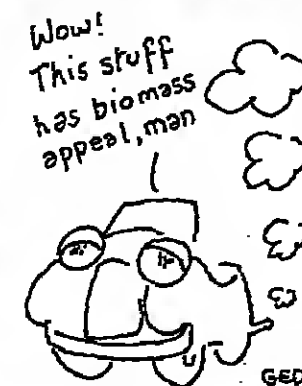
gauge at 9.85 per cent for three years on his brick house on a hill in Huntingdon last October.

As his Chancellor has gone on pursuing the goal of the green shoot, Major's decision has looked more and more questionable. At a conservative estimate, his move to a fixed rate is costing the Major household about £100 per month extra in mortgage repayments.

"With rates now at 7.99 per cent, it looks to have been a pretty silly move," says one analyst. "It doesn't give you much faith in his predictions for the economy."

Gone to pot?

AFTER last week's blistering attack in *The Spectator* on *Country Life*, accusing the marketing men of dragging it downmarket, the rural glossy will take heart from goings-on in Manhattan. Quest, the most chintzy of all Ameri-



Wow! This stuff has biomass appeal, man

Changing China's guard

Hardliners need prosperity too, says Michael Yahuda

Is it possible that China's leaders disagree about how best to handle the Hong Kong question? According to the Hong Kong leftist press, Deng Xiaoping, the Supreme Leader and the key decision-maker on Hong Kong, is said to have remarked that he has been criticised for having already conceded too much to the British. Yet it has also been suggested that within China there have been fears that the confrontationalist approach towards the governor, Chris Patten, as typified by Li Peng, the prime minister, leaves no room for either side to compromise without losing face.

It is necessary to appreciate the depth of distrust that China's oldest leaders harbour towards Britain over Hong Kong. These are men, like Deng himself, who came to political maturity in the aftermath of the first world war, and whose experience of the miseries in France from 1920 to 1926 did not suggest that the rulers of capitalist Europe were imbued with benevolence at home or with altruism in their treatment of Asians abroad.

To this day China's leaders suspect a longstanding British design to abscond with the surplus capital of Hong Kong and to leave the territory in disarray in the hands of an influential pro-British group. Indeed, since the collapse of communism elsewhere, China's leaders have suspected that the British are in league with the Americans to set up Hong Kong as a base to subvert communist rule in their country.

Support for such views is to be found particularly in sections of the military and among economic conservatives. If the leftist Hong Kong press is to be believed, some of the old generals were anxious last December to teach the British a lesson. The economic conservatives have never had a good word to say about Hong Kong. They still seek to uphold the remnants of the old command economy of state-owned enterprises and the state control of grain.

But others favour a less harsh approach to the issue. Two leaders from Guangdong, a province that has become economically integrated with Hong Kong — Ye Xiangping, a former governor of the province, and the vice mayor of Shenzhen — have publicly sought to defuse tensions. Others who favour further economic and administrative reforms have privately expressed disquiet about the aggravation of tensions.

Last year they received a boost from Deng Xiaoping himself. His southern tour, which he used to overwork the more cautious conservative approach in favour of an accelerated rate of economic development, was the occasion on which he called for Guangdong to become a new East Asian Industrial Economy. This was an indirect endorsement for Hong Kong. Deng went further to elevate his economic programmes into a strategy for the political survival of the Communist party in China, unlike its Soviet counterpart, was that it had presided over increasing prosperity.

The Party Congress last year and the National Peoples Congress now are facilitating a change of generations as the elderly Long Marchers and Founding Fathers withdraw from the front stage. It may be that among these ostensibly more reformist and modern leaders will be found a more conciliatory approach towards Hong Kong. But it is premature to place much hope in them. Deng Xiaoping is known to be the ultimate decision-maker on Hong Kong, and although at the age of 88 he can barely be understood except as mediated by his daughters, he has effectively pre-empted open discussion.

Even at this late stage the Chinese might be prepared to enter into talks about talks, but failing that, the proposed legislation could be amended in the legislative council in such a way as to appear to erode Mr Patten's original proposals. While the Chinese will not allow the legislative council to have veto over agreements with Britain and do not like the idea of the council being able to amend agreements with Britain — a crafty way for Britain to have two bites at the cherry — it might be possible for the council to amend British proposals before they are put to the Chinese. If they were to narrow the electorate for the functional constituencies, for example, or to allow membership of the election committee to be wider, the Chinese could take that as a basis for starting proceedings from that point.

But the Chinese decision-making structure about Hong Kong is thin and lopsided. The key is the Hong Kong Macao Office headed by Li Ping. He has ministerial status and is directly accountable to the prime minister — the conservative Li Peng. He is however, effectively divorced from the other ministries and organisations that deal with Hong Kong.

Hong Kong is crucial to China's continued economic developments and reform. It is in effect China's main port; it accounts for more than 60 per cent of commercial investment in China, and has itself absorbed US\$20 billion investment from the mainland. Its potential political constituency in China is vast. But it is one 88-year-old man who counts. And he has to balance his suspicions of the British with his need for Hong Kong as a key to the accelerated economic development which he deems vital to preservation of communist rule.

The author is a reader in international relations at the London School of Economics.

Seen and not heard

FOR one supposedly constrained by Budget purdah, Norman Lamont has been surprisingly visible over the past few weeks. Indeed, so high-profile has the Chancellor been that some commentators have felt that the Treasury's traditional period of silence has effectively been ended.

Nothing, however, is further from the truth. Lamont may have been out and about, but to the private relief of his aides, the contents of today's Budget speech have not.

Most conspicuously he gave an on-the-record interview at the weekend to *The Independent* on Sunday, while *The Sunday Times* carried a day-in-the-life feature. Last week Lamont and his ministers staged a photo-call at the Treasury, while last month he chaired a G7 meeting in London, followed by a press conference. February also saw him hold an impromptu press conference outside No 11 Downing Street to praise the latest retail sales figures. But despite these opportunities, not a single Budget secret has been let slip from his lips.

Lord Healey, the former Chancellor, thinks purdah, either the traditional version or the Lamontian variation, is a waste of time. "Complete nonsense," he says. "I

always found it very frustrating. You have to talk to all sorts of people such as ministers whose departments are involved. You have to tell the cabinet. You have to take on board what they say. But it does have one advantage. It can be convenient if you don't want to answer questions." The Chancellor not answer questions? Surely not.

Even the Queen's banker cannot beat the weather. Yesterday, Courts & Co chairman Sir David Money-Coutts was due to be at the bank's Strand headquarters, hosting a reception for V.S. Naipaul, winner of the first £50,000 David Cohen British Literature Prize. Money-Coutts, whose bank is administering the prize with the Arts Council, unfortunately picked the worst week this century to holiday on the east coast of America. It ended at the weekend in South Carolina, which suffered the full brunt of the storm. Last night he was still there.

Prime rates

THERE is a certain disincentive for Norman Lamont to lower interest rates in the Budget; it might not go down terribly well with his boss. John Major fixed his mort-

can property magazines is advocating that marijuana should be legalised.

In her publisher's letter, boldly displayed on the first page of editorial, Heather Cochrane says the marijuana plant should be harvested and turned into biomass to "fuel cars and airplanes"; it should be used to help sufferers from AIDS and cancer.

Though Cochrane is not so convinced her very rich readership in Manhattan will agree, her commitment is overriding. There aren't many joints being passed around at their parties, but it would help keep the drug dealers off the streets and it would have so many beneficial aspects," she says.

But *The Spectator* can rest assured: the endorsement of pot at *Country Life* is a long way off. "I

suppose it is an agricultural crop, but I think it is out across the bows of some of our readers," says Clive Aslet, the editor.

Reporters reported

THE six signatories of yesterday's letter to *The Times* — John Simpson, Polly Toynbee, Robin Oakley, Peter Jay, Martyn Lewis and Peter Sissons — were much in demand yesterday, not least by the BBC. As well as most national newspapers, Channel 4, news and LBC, requests for interviews came from Radio 4's *Today* programme.

All, however, decided not to comment further than their letter. The thought of being grilled on the BBC was most ridiculous of all, they judged. But had they appeared, they would have revealed how common freelance contracts now are at the BBC. Six O'Clock News presenter Peter Sissons, for instance, refers to himself as a "contract artist", and Polly Toynbee, the social affairs editor, is also believed to be on a contract. As for the corporation's new member of staff, the BBC's press office was yesterday busy promising Fleet Street picture desks a photo-opportunity of Joan Birs arriving for work at Broadcasting House today. Business as usual, they say, but no questions. The director general of the BBC not answer questions? Surely not.

Beneath BBC advertisements in yesterday's *Guardian* for a head of the Bulgarian section and a deputy editor of Russian features was an appeal for contract executives. The corporation wants them on a temporary basis "to join a small team, responsible for the fee assessment and negotiation of contracts". Cackling up with a backlog, perhaps.

Mirror of politics

WHEN he picked up a prize from the late John Arlott for being the most promising youngster at the journalist training college at Portsmouth, John Williams hoped that one day he might become a political correspondent. But he feared he would never succeed because he did not have a university degree.

John Arlott told me then not to worry. It did not matter," says Williams. How right he was. Yesterday Williams was appointed political editor of the strife-torn *Daily Mirror*.

Having been political correspondent at the *Evening Standard* for eight years, and prior to that this paper's Labour correspondent for five he is well grounded in politics. As for the vexed question of the *Mirror's* politics, Williams is neither a Tory nor a committed socialist, in other words, suitably flexible.

Primary schools to select pupils



GREAT DANES

Danish voters will have to speak up for their neighbours too

While British politicians take a break from the Maastricht bill to debate the Budget, in Denmark the battle for the second Maastricht referendum is just beginning. Yesterday the ruling Social Democrats launched their campaign for a yes vote on May 18 as polls showed a further slight move away from the treaty. Opposition to Maastricht is swelling in almost every EC country, but Danish voters are the only ones left with a direct chance to express their views. Since John Major still resists a British referendum despite its clear tactical advantages for him, Britons who oppose the treaty will have to rely on the Danes to provide the only possible extra-parliamentary impetus for the treaty to be rethought.

Because of the opt-outs that Denmark won at the Edinburgh summit in December, a yes vote is more likely than not. But support has ebbed since then from a high of 70 per cent to just 48 per cent last weekend. (The vote is hovering between 25 and 30 per cent.) Most people expect a narrow victory for the establishment; but so did they last June when the Danish people rebelled against their politicians. More political parties are going to support the yes campaign this time; but that may not help to win public opinion to the cause.

Increasingly the Danes have been looking across the North Sea to Britain for a lead in their debates over Maastricht. British Eurosceptics will head over there en masse during the Easter parliamentary recess. They are already becoming familiar figures on Danish television. But Mr Major and his foreign secretary, Douglas Hurd, have also managed, perhaps inadvertently, to give succour to the no campaign.

When Mr Major rashly promised, as he faced defeat in the paving debate last November, that British ratification would await the second Danish referendum, he may have thought he was merely buying time

and Commons votes. The promise saved the night for him, but it could prove costlier than he thought. The yes campaign in Denmark is likely to lean heavily on scare tactics, on fears that the Danes will be isolated in Europe if they vote no. But the acknowledgement by Mr Major, and subsequently Mr Hurd, that Britain will not go ahead with ratification if Denmark rejects the treaty has heartened the Danish sceptics. The isolation argument now carries much less weight.

Besides, those Danes who are wary of the treaty need only look to France and Germany to discover how commonplace such views have become. More than half the French now wish they had voted no last September, according to opinion polls. And even the consensus among politicians there is starting to fragment, due perhaps to political pressures in advance of the general election later this month.

Rogue conservatives such as Charles Pasqua and Philippe Seguin question the wisdom of the *franc fort* policy, which ties the French franc to the mark regardless of the consequences of high interest rates on the economy. Even Pierre Lellouche, foreign policy adviser to the leader of the centre-right UDF, Jacques Chirac, admits that the Maastricht treaty was designed for different times. Whoever becomes prime minister, Brussels expects hostility to the EC in France to increase. Meanwhile, the ruling political parties in Germany, all of which support the treaty, have been chastened by the success of anti-Maastricht parties in *Länder* elections.

French and German voters have been, or will be, voting by proxy. The ostensible question put to them is the governance of their own country or region. The Danes by contrast can deliver a clear message, to their own leaders and to those in Brussels. European politicians have overreached themselves. It is time they were chastened; and time for a rethink.

SENSE ABOUT A MODERN PLAGUE

Tests of doctors would be negligible in the war against Aids

Reckless publicity is the oxygen of panic, as the recent string of Aids cases involving health workers has shown. Bolton health authority was yesterday pressured into releasing the name of a general practitioner who died of Aids last summer after failing to reveal his condition to the hospital where he performed minor invasive surgery. The clamour of voices calling for compulsory HIV-testing of medical staff who perform surgery has never been more powerful.

Even in a society that aspires to protect individual liberty, the defence of public health has to be governed by utilitarian values. The state must take the measures necessary to curtail epidemics, whether by quarantine, testing for contamination, or the destruction of infected property.

When the cabinet committee on Aids led by Lord Whitelaw disbanded in 1989, it argued that it had overseen the necessary changes in public policy to contain the disease. But the spread of Aids, especially among those at greatest risk such as drug addicts and homosexuals, has increased the pressure upon the government to assume greater powers in particular circumstances. Advocates of compulsory testing for health workers now argue that the trust of patients must be matched by a greater sense of responsibility among doctors — enforced, if necessary, by law.

The calls for legal enforcement of testing should not be heeded. Mandatory tests might assuage public alarm temporarily, but would be an insignificant weapon in the battle against Aids. Since the test detects antibodies generated by the body to combat the HIV virus rather than the virus itself, an

infected person can register negative for up to three months. Not even compulsory quarterly tests for every British health worker involved in invasive surgery — which would cost the taxpayer £30 million a year — could provide patients with cast-iron guarantees.

The risks from such contact are, in any case, minute. In the decade since Aids emerged in the West, there has not been a single confirmed case of a doctor infecting a patient with the virus. In contrast, about 148 health workers around the world are already believed to have contracted HIV from treating infected patients. Faced with compulsory testing, surgeons would have every right to demand that patients also be screened.

District authorities and the health department must now consider the proper limits of confidentiality and how best to reconcile doctors' right to privacy with patients' right to know. In this delicate matter, wanton openness would be as undesirable as absolute secrecy. Mid Glamorgan authority was quite wrong to conceal for five months the fact that one of its junior hospital doctors had died from Aids. But instant disclosure of every case of infection would be counterproductive, deterring doctors from revealing their illness to hospital managers.

Bolton health authority might have set a sensible precedent by contacting the patients who came into contact with the doctor while refusing to publicise his name. Instead, it has bowed to irrational pressure. It is scarcely surprising that the public, urged to ring up "emergency helplines" as if a plane had crashed, have adopted a crisis mentality. Those who manage the nation's health must now restore a sense of perspective.

THE THEATRE OF BUDGETS

Here is the Chancellor's day to enliven the grind of recession

Budget day should have its theatre as well as its politics. Those who know little and care less for other peoples' tax-bands need bread and circuses as well as tricky sums on their once-a-year day for the political economy.

This Chancellor of the Exchequer has been a fine impresario — better in his two previous budgets than as an economist. He has been diligent with his photo-opportunities of bourgeois domesticity for the Sunday papers. On this day when professional snappers in St James's Park outnumber even the Canada geese, Norman Lamont will take the ritual stroll for the benefit of the big lenses. The scaffolding is up opposite Number 11 Downing Street for the broadside of cameras to capture the odd British image of a man brandishing a battered, brass-handled box 130 years old.

Mr Lamont has even let drop in the right places the information that he will be fortifying his Budget speech with a glass of Highland Park whisky. Drinking while at the despatch box is a departure from parliamentary practice introduced as part of the Budget dramas. Disraeli favoured brandy. Gladstone drank sherry and whipped egg while presenting his Budget. Most of the human race care fifty times more for a drink than marginal tax rates.

Gladstone, who was largely responsible for inventing the Budget as national accounting day, would have approved of the theatre. He was expert at exploiting the contemporary media, and used Budget day as an opportunity to make a very long speech

a witness of one of his Budget speeches, he talked boring shop like a tenth muse.

He might have deplored the brevity of modern Budget speeches, having set the record when he spoke for five hours when he introduced his first Budget in 1853. But modern evening news schedules do not allow time for such grand verbosity; the concision of television sound-bites — "platitudes on a night out" as one senior politician described them recently — makes it otiose. Although dress standards have slipped, members of Parliament will today still be dressed in their brightest livery of ties and frocks because of Gladstone's legacy.

He would have judged that the House is not yet making the best of the television cameras, which seem to have shrunk its size and abbreviated its attention span, and reduced Prime Minister's questions to an exchange of noisy slogans. He would be grieved by the absence of the serious questions that turned Budget day into a national debate. The custom of not intervening in the Chancellor's Budget speech has grown up over the past century without authority from *Erskine May*. So has the modern intervention, a creature like the pelican that is 90 per cent mouth and minimal interrogation expecting an answer.

A political tradition dies today with this last spring Budget. Next December will come a chance to create new traditions, and make longer, Gladstonian sermons, since the new Budget will deal with spending plans as well as the broad annual accounting. But a bit of theatre will still be needed.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 071-782 5000

Birt clash puts focus on BBC duty as a public service

From the General Secretary of the National Union of Journalists

Sir, It is a sign of the atmosphere in the BBC that I have been asked to sign this letter on behalf of many journalists in the corporation who fear to add their own names. Individuals who publicly dissent from the line orchestrated by current management have good reason to worry.

Is John Birt a good leader for the BBC? His clumsy response to criticism of his tax avoidance scheme demonstrates he is not.

The journalists and other staff are not resisting change for the sake of it. They have embraced new technology, accepted staff reductions and new shift patterns, co-operated with changed employment conditions and welcomed greater flexibility.

Most accept that the result of "Birtism" in news and current affairs has been a more serious and more robust and serious journalism. John Birt has been good for BBC journalism, but his further plans threaten the BBC as a whole, and will certainly damage the service it provides.

He has abandoned competition and replaced the choice of listeners and viewers by the judgment of bureaucrats in assessing success or failure. He expects and even plans for a sharp reduction in the BBC's audience share, before satellite television has shown any sign of real penetration. He orders producers and controllers to concentrate on programmes not offered by commercial broadcasters.

The BBC must continue to provide the very best of programmes across the whole range demanded by the public, and let the audience choose what to watch and listen to. If it becomes only a monopoly supplier of minority programmes, Mr Birt will have presided over the deliberate and pointless reduction of an enormous asset.

Contrary to the views expressed by Mr Birt's board of management (letter, March 15) there are others of standing and talent who could easily fill the space he occupies. That applies, even more, to the BBC chairman, Mr Huxley.

Only when these two go can the BBC, from the governors down, join in a real and open debate about the protection and improvement of Britain's incomparable public-service radio and television.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN C. FOSTER,
General Secretary,
National Union of Journalists,
Acom House,
314-320 Gray's Inn Road, WC1,
March 15.

From Mr Robert Kee

Sir, I am surprised that journalists as reputable as the six who have written to you (letter, March 15) in support of

John Birt should have made the mistake of saying that he "speedily corrected" his error of judgement. It took him over five years and he did so apparently only when he had been found out.

Yours faithfully,
ROBERT KEE,
82 Camberwell Grove, SE5.

From Sir Peregrine Worsthorne

Sir, On the essence of Mr John Birt's *raison d'être* as a public-service broadcaster, many of his predecessors, particularly Hugh Carlsson and Robert Green, by sounder, I mean better, attuned to the BBC's responsibilities for promoting the public weal.

On tax arrangements his judgment may have been faulty. But it has not been faulty on more important matters, such as how the BBC should report the great national issues of the day. Whereas on these issues the BBC, even five years ago, was in danger of losing the conservative-minded majority's confidence, that danger has now passed, and this is in no small part due to Mr Birt.

Unavoidably this has meant him making enemies of all those who believe that the BBC should remain part of the adversarial culture. But their enmity, now being demonstrated so implacably, is the clearest of all possible evidences that he is doing a good job.

In any case, were his tax arrangements all that reprehensible? By comparison with the tax dodges we read about for most top executives, they sound to me quite remarkably modest. Much more important is the exemplary nature of his private life as a model family man.

Yours sincerely,
PEREGRINE WORTHORNE,
The Old Rectory,
Hedgerley, Buckinghamshire.

From Lady Howe of Aberavon and others

Sir, John Birt made an error of judgment, which he has recognised and remedied. It would be a tragedy for the BBC and for us all if this brought about his resignation. He is an experienced, dedicated and outstanding broadcaster and the BBC needs him to implement the changes required if it is to survive and prosper. We hope he stays.

Yours faithfully,
ELSPETH HOWE,
MARGARET JAY,
ANN MALLALIEU,
PETER MANDELSON,
GRAHAM MATHER,
AUSTIN MITCHELL,
As from: 8 John Adam Street, WC2.

From Mr Denis Meehan

Sir, John Simpson and his colleagues (letter, March 15) may well be right in

suggesting that some of those within the BBC who are calling for Mr Birt's resignation have improper motives. Licence-payers may be trusted to be more objective.

In my view Mr Birt, by choosing to engage in anti-social financial practices over a number of years while fully employed by the BBC, has shown himself morally unfit to be director-general, however outstanding his intellectual and managerial qualities may be.

Yours faithfully,
DENIS MEEHAN,
238 Upper Richmond Road,
Putney, SW15,
March 15.

From Councillor Selwyn Ward

Sir, If the income from being director-general of the BBC is not the "emolument of an office or employment" within tax schedule E, what is?

In addition to my own schedule D and schedule E earnings, I receive as a local councillor a small honorarium which is taxed under PAYE. Even if my constituents were unconcerned at the prospect of being represented by Selwyn Ward Political Consultants Ltd., I don't for a moment believe that such a proposal would get past my local tax inspector.

Yours sincerely,
SELWYN WARD,
London Borough of Bromley,
Members' Room,
Bromley Civic Centre,
Stockwell Close, Bromley, Kent,
March 15.

From the President of the Broadcasting, Entertainment, Cinematograph & Theatre Union

Sir, Libby Purves's reflections on her BBC career (Modern Times, March 12) demonstrate that freelance working has long existed in the broadcasting industry, though until John Birt's arrival this was not an option open to directors-general.

However, she was mistaken when she implied that the choice of working freelance is a matter of individual temperament. The sad truth about the audio-visual industry is that production and technical staff are being forced unwillingly into freelance work by the wholesale job losses in permanent workplaces.

When these reluctant, but *bona fide*, freelancers are engaged by John Birt's BBC, full income tax is often deducted from their payments. Small wonder that those who shouldn't pay tax, but do, are outraged to discover that he who should, didn't.

Yours faithfully,
TONY LENNON,
President,
Broadcasting, Entertainment, Cinematograph & Theatre Union,
111 Wardour Street, W1,
March 12.

Press controls

From the Editor of the Daily Mail

Sir, I was very sorry to see Donald Trefford (letter, March 12) supporting the call for an ombudsman to replace the Press Complaints Commission — a view which I believe is not shared by other national newspaper editors, as shown by the letter from the editor of the *Daily Express* (March 13).

The notion of an ombudsman, which seems to derive from a wish to tighten up press regulations without going so far as to introduce government controls, is a compromise which would be both misguided and unworkable.

An ombudsman, appointed by a committee where the press was in a minority, would not have the virtues of self-regulation. He or she would not attract the goodwill and support of the press in the way the PCC does.

It is suggested that an ombudsman would have the power to fine newspapers but it is really desirable for an

appointed individual to be able, without reference to others, to impose financial punishments with no right of appeal? Britain already has draconian libel laws. Do we really need a further range of arbitrary fines, some of which would provoke charges of political bias?

The problem for the press is the growing myth — encouraged by politicians whose susceptibilities have been bruised by newspapers — that self-regulation has failed. In fact there is little evidence for this.

The PCC code of practice is respected and there have been only occasional lapses. In 1992, the commission received 52 complaints against the *Daily Mail*. In half the cases there had been no prima facie breach of the code. Five were resolved by agreement and only one had to go to adjudication (when the complaint was rejected).

Special pleading is invidious, but I believe that such statistics reflect a growing awareness of our responsibilities. Since the advent of the PCC, newspapers' standards of accuracy

have improved, corrections have been published more promptly and the debate over ethical conduct has intensified.

There is, of course, room for further reforms. The press supports the appointment of more lay members to the PCC. Legislation is needed to provide protection from electronic bugging.

It cannot, however, be stressed too often that self-regulation is the only discipline that really works. It is effective because it operates through consent. It is human nature to co-operate with something of one's own devising but to try to circumvent that which is imposed from outside.

To create an ombudsman would be to make a half-way house between self-regulation and the law of the land. At best it would breed confusion and ill-will. At worst, it would create an arbitrary and illiberal power.

Yours faithfully,
PAUL DACKRE,
Editor, *Daily Mail*,
Northcliffe House,
2 Derry Street, Kensington, W8.

Space telescope

From the Editor of Space

Sir, In your editorial, "Eye on Creation" (March 11), you say that the story of the Hubble space telescope "has so far been one of tantalising disappointment".

This is largely wrong. Although the telescope cannot see the far distant object, in astronomical terms, it is doing extremely good science at a lesser distance.

There was an initial disappointment when the mirror aberration was discovered, but very quickly computer scientists began to develop techniques for restoring images to virtually complete clarity. Only images of the faintest objects remain significantly impacted.

With several successful on-orbit servicing missions behind us, the Hubble servicing mission could hardly be described as "if not impossible, at least high risk". Servicing Hubble was planned from the start, before the mirror defect became apparent.

There is, of course, some risk. With the telescope working so close to its original expectations it is perhaps worth asking if it is best left alone?

Yours sincerely,
IAN PARKER, Editor,
Space, 11 High Street,
Burnham, Buckinghamshire.

Fish 'wars'

From Ms Debra Fox

Sir, The sight on television of British fishermen demonstrating against their French counterparts by overturning crates of fish and scattering the contents (report, March 11) filled me with horror and despair.

I do not seek to question the grounds of their argument, but to remind them of the plight of the starving millions: only days ago scenes of the famine and war afflicting the Sudan were brought once again into our living rooms.

Surely protests can be made in a more dignified way.

Yours faithfully,
DEBRA FOX,
Flat 4, 14 Dawson Place, W2.

Sitting and thinking

From Mrs A. R. Trouton

Sir, Why not the word "straponin" for go-up seats in taxis (Mr John Gaze's letter, March 10)? The Collins-Robert French-English dictionary translates it as "jump seat" or "fold-away seat".

And wasn't the "dickie" seat the one that folded out from the back of the car, where the boot now is?

Yours faithfully,
ROSEMARY TROUTON,
196 Ruskin Park House,
Champion Hill, SE5.

Vital importance of pure research

From Professor F. H. C. Crick, OM, FRS, and others

Sir, The government is about to define its policy for science and technology in a white paper. As Nobel laureates who have worked in the Medical Research Council's Laboratory of Molecular Biology at Cambridge, we are concerned by suggestions that it should be based on the MRC and perhaps privatised, because any such move would jeopardise its continued world leadership in the biomedical field.

The laboratory's persistent success since its formation 31 years ago owes much to the enlightened policies pursued by the MRC. Most of the great advances that have brought eight Nobel prizes as well as many other awards are the outcome of years of exploring uncharted waters. The laboratory has been fortunate to have much of medicine, and some of the have directly benefited diagnosis and treatment.

However, at the outset the problems that we and others attacked were not known to be fundamental to biology; their relevance to practical medicine was not obvious and their commercial applications looked utopian. The MRC took a long-term view, often investing not so much in the research projects themselves as in the talents of the scientists concerned, whom the supported throughout the many years while the outcome of their research remained in doubt.

The MRC's long-term view does not imply scarcity of funding regard to scientific quality. Like all other work funded by the MRC, the laboratory's research is reviewed at five yearly intervals by panels of international experts in the various fields, and continued support is contingent on their reports, thus ensuring accountability to the government and the public, who ultimately pay for it.

Some of the scientific advances made in the laboratory have created wealth in the form of new products, techniques and instruments, but these practical applications became apparent only after the fundamental scientific problems had been solved and could not have been foreseen. Commercial companies have to look for assured profits within a reasonable time and cannot risk investing in research in fields which are not fully formed and so may take many years to bear fruit. Moreover, the results might bring little direct financial reward even if they benefit medicine.

It is unlikely that the Laboratory of Molecular Biology could maintain its high quality in an environment which required it to seek its main funding from contracts. On the other hand, its continued association with the MRC may pave the way for further advances of great benefit to medicine. Its future now looks as bright as its past, and we hope that it will not be put at risk.

Yours faithfully,
FRANCIS CRICK,
(Salk Institute, California),
JOHN KENDREW,
K. KOHLER (Max Planck Institut für Immunbiologie, Freiburg, Germany),
F. SANGER,
J. D. WATSON (Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, Long Island, New York),
As from: The Old Guildhall,
Linton, Cambridge,
March 8.

Hazards on the slopes

From Mr Andrew J. Enright

Sir, There have been numerous fatalities in the Alps this year brought about primarily by poor snow cover and overworked pistes. Given this scenario, it is up to the users of these pistes to conduct themselves in a responsible manner and limit their speed accordingly.

Rather than banning snowboarders from certain pistes or resorts as Colonel Monty Fliss proposes (letter, March 11), a far more sensible policy would be that adopted by the Swiss resort of Zermatt, whereby piste "policemen" curb excessive speed and reckless skiing with a wide variety of powers, such as confiscation of lift passes or fines.

This ensures a standard policy, rather than apportioning blame to one largely responsible section of the winter sports community.

Yours faithfully,
ANDREW J. ENRIGHT,
6 Carlton Road,
Southampton, Hampshire.

Down the drain?

From Mr Julian Mannering

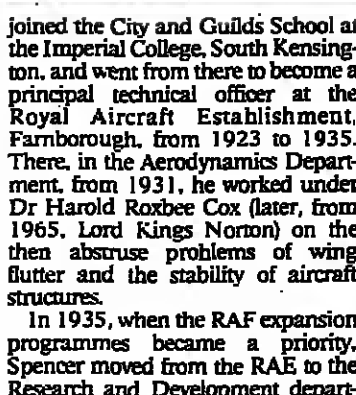
Sir, Yesterday, I lost my wallet which contained the usual collection of credit cards and cash. In this case French francs as well as two English fivers. I was, however, most fortunate to have it returned to me by a kind soul who found it abandoned in the street.

Upon its retrieval I discovered that the francs had been carefully extracted and the pounds discarded along with the wallet. What further indignities can possibly befall our currency?

Yours faithfully,
JULIAN MANNERING,
13 Abbey Street, Faversham, Kent,
March 5.

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 071-782 5046.

SIR KELVIN SPENCER



As Chief Scientist, Spencer was concerned with both the develop-

His wife Phoebe died in 1989. He leaves a son.

CARLOS MARCELLO

Marcello's hatred of Robert Kennedy led to suspicion.

PROFESSOR WILLIAM PRICE



and postgraduate students have good cause to remember his inspiration as a teacher and his warmth of personality.

He is survived, after 53 years of marriage, by his wife, Nest, and their son and daughter.

PERSONAL COLUMN

[illegible]

DEVALANKUNDA VADIRAJ

A stone carving by Vadiraj in traditional Indian style

LYNCH LAW IN NEW ORLEANS.

It had been intended to take *Matheo*, who had been the leader of the Italian assassins, outside and hang him: but in the meantime another section of the mob had broken into the cell where he was confined. He heard the men coming and rushed from the cell, but was cornered in the gallery of the condemned prison. Here a young man in the mob hit him on the head with the butt end of a rifle, which caused him to drop senseless. It was reported that he was dead: but as the crowd was about to leave some one suggested that as an extraordinary precaution he should be placed beyond any possibility of recovery, a bullet was fired.

ON THIS DAY

March 16 1891

Nothing is left to the imagination in this gruesome report of the lynching of 11 Italians accused of the murder of the New Orleans chief of police.

through his brain at point-blank range, and his corpse was left where it fell.

But a still more dreadful act of the tragedy was yet to come. The avengers were not yet satisfied. They wanted more. They got hold of Bagno and dragged him from out of the building. He had already been fatally wounded, and his dark face was besmeared with blood. As the crowd in the square caught sight of him they uttered a roar of rage. They had heard shouts within the gaol, but had not seen the slaughter. Some one brought a rope, which was noosed and thrown round the man's neck. The other end was cast over the

limb of a tree. The dying wretch was swung up, then a fusillade from a score of weapons ended his sufferings.

In another instant, a side door of the prison opening on Marat's street was pushed open and several armed men appeared pushing before them Polizzi, the half-crazed Sicilian who offered to turn State's evidence. He looked aghast with terror and was evidently quite mad. He was without coat or hat and his long black hair hung over his face.

At the corner is a lamp post. A man threw a rope across the street. Another man scaled the post and passed the rope over it with a noose at one end. The noose was adjusted round the neck of the trembling wretch by the ropes but the man who was at the post, the other end of the rope was pulled at by a third man, who quickly formed for the purpose. The man who had jumped into the air, but only for an instant, for the rope recoiled and he fell to the pavement. In a couple of seconds the rope was readjusted, strong hands pulled it taut, and the body was again pulled from the post. As soon as the man was high enough to escape the range and size of the noose, he was again pulled down, and the people a dozen reports rang out, the heads of the gushers from Polizzi's face and many more shrieked his body. The rope was tied securely to

NEWS

Lawson wants £6bn tax increases

Lord Lawson, a former Chancellor, last night warned Norman Lamont that it would be a serious mistake if he did not raise taxes by £6 billion in today's Budget.

The former Chancellor's intervention came amid growing signs that Mr Lamont's speech to the Commons today could herald swingeing tax increases next year scheduled for next year. Pages 1, 4, 8, 18, 19, 23, 27

Peking threatens 'treacherous Patten'

Li Peng, the Chinese prime minister, used the annual opening of parliament to accuse Chris Patten, the Hong Kong governor, of treachery and threatened reprisals over his plans for democratic reforms in the colony. Mr Li warned that Britain would be exclusively responsible for all serious consequences. Pages 1, 10, 18, 23, 27

Visiting prince

The Prince of Wales is to visit some of the 2,500 British troops in Bosnia-Herzegovina when he flies by Royal Navy Sea King helicopter to the troubled region today. Pages 1, 15

BBC storm

Public support for the position of John Birt as director-general of the BBC grows, but pressure on the chairman, Marmaduke Hussey, to resign is mounting. Pages 1, 19

Aids doctor

Yarab Mudrik Almahawi, 33, a trainee GP who died of an AIDS-related illness, was said to have taken part in up to 100 operations during two years at Dungannon. Pages 1, 2, 17, 19

Rugby death

Seamus Lavelle, 25, a rugby forward, has died of head injuries suffered in a dash with a rival player in a junior club match between Hendon and Centaur. Page 3

Pits 'viable'

A report commissioned by the government says that between seven and 14 of 31 pits scheduled for closure by British Coal could be economic. Page 2

Annual shilling

Sigrid Griffiths, the divorced first wife of Sir Eldon Griffiths, former MP for Bury St Edmunds, receives Sp a year maintenance, and is claiming £74,000 damages from solicitors. Page 4

Form book before the Good Book

Father Sean Breen, parish priest of Templeogue south of Dublin, leads a migration of tens of thousands of Irishmen today to the Cheltenham National Hunt festival. Fr Breen, making his twenty-fifth pilgrimage to what his countrymen call "the crack", puts aside his Bible in favour of the form book for the three-day event. Page 3

she blames for not obtaining a better settlement. Page 6

Charities crisis

Many of Britain's top charities are spending more than they are being given largely because of a huge increase in requests for help, according to the *Henderson Top 1,000 Charities* guide. Page 6

Drought warning

Water companies are already warning of possible drought as a result of a dry February despite early winter rain which brought prolonged floods to many parts of the country. Page 7

Trade meeting

A meeting between President Clinton and Jacques Delors the EC president, has been arranged amid growing fears that America might be preparing for a trade war. Page 14

Bombay bombs

Two more bombs were discovered and defused as Bombay, still shaken by the wave of explosions which killed more than 300, braced itself for further attacks. Police shot dead two men suspected of involvement in the bombings. Page 11

Pay threat

Some local authorities, trying to salvage this year's national curriculum against the threat of mounting union disruption, have said they will dock teachers' pay if they take part in a boycott of tests. Page 4



Sweet magnolia: Juliet Wragge-Morley and her son, Alexander, three, examine the early blossom at Kew. Migrant flight, Page 7

Green shoots: Manufacturing output

in Britain rose 0.8 per cent in January, the highest increase since March 1990. Page 23

Thumbs up: The Clinton administration

has approved British Airways' \$300 million (£210 million) investment in USAir but continues to press its claim for greater access for American airlines to the British market. Page 23

Markets: The FT-SE 100 index

of leading shares ended up 6.5 at 2,922 in quiet trading as dealers marked time ahead of today's Budget. The pound eased .15 cents against the dollar to \$1.4330 and closed down .52 pence at DM2.3835. Page 26

Football: Chelsea's Ian Pearce

is one of the talents chosen by the Times football correspondent, Rob Hughes, who are presently gracing the world under-20 football championships in Australia. Page 42

Cricket: England's cricketers

endured another long day in the field in Colombo. At the close of play on the third day of their Test match, Sri Lanka had reached 408 for eight, a first innings lead of 28. Page 44

TV sport: The Premier League

is prepared to delay the final games of Manchester United and Aston Villa until Sunday, May 9 to allow BSkyB to provide live coverage of both. Page 44

New analyses: Many American

women, told by specialists for the past decade that they should pay for a regular mammogram to survive breast cancer, are now seriously questioning that advice. Aileen Balfour reports. Pages 6, 17

Self-elected swingers: From Kinsey

to Masters and Johnson, sex surveys have seen themselves as presenting raw factual truth: not only about their particular set of subjects but about the larger society. They seem to make no allowance for those who may be economical with the truth. Janet Daley on a fresh survey. Page 16

Naiपाल honoured: The Trinidadian

novelist V.S. Naipaul yesterday won the first David Cohen British Literature Prize, Britain's biggest literary award. He celebrates the mingling of post-colonial cultures which has enriched English literature. Page 37

Wraps off the Savoy: Ravaged by

fire three years ago, the Savoy theatre will open this summer with its interior restored to its former art deco glory. Page 38

Ghosts of the past: Why doesn't

the ghost in *Hamlet* terrify us as it did our Victorian forbears? Theatre critic Benedict Nightingale believes that today's actors have lost the art of being shocking. Page 39

THE TIMES TOMORROW

Can Birt and Hussey survive?

Peter Fiddick assesses the roles of the governors of the BBC in the survival of John Birt, the director-general, and Marmaduke Hussey, the chairman.

Who wins in flatland?

A free-for-all or a breath of fresh air for flat-dwellers? Rachel Kelly's question-and-answer guide explains the proposed new law.

Has facelift left Wren intact?

What have they done to the Old Observatory in Greenwich? Nigel Hawkes takes a look at the £2 million restoration of Sir Christopher Wren's magnificent Octagon Room.

Who is a Greek goddess, a pre-Raphaelite heroine, Greta Garbo and Mother Teresa, all rolled into one? The answer in *Without Walls* (Channel 4, 9pm). Page 43

Danish pastry

Opposition to Maastricht is swelling in almost every EC country, but Danish voters are the only ones left with a direct chance to express their views. Page 19

Aids panic

Mandatory tests might assuage public alarm temporarily, but would be insignificant in the battle against Aids. Page 19

Budget dramatics

Gladstone drank sherry and whipped egg while presenting his Budget. Most of the human race care 50 times more for a drink than VAT rates. Page 19

MICHAEL YAHUDA

It is necessary to appreciate the depth of distrust that China's oldest leaders harbour towards Britain over Hong Kong. These are men who came to political maturity in the aftermath of the first world war, and whose experience of the miseries in France from 1920 to 1926 did not suggest that the rulers of capitalist Europe were imbued with benevolence at home or abroad. Page 18

BERNARD LEVIN

As I have pointed out before, no one has ever read *Das Kapital* right through, all four volumes. Marx himself didn't do so as it did our Victorian forbears? Theatre critic Benedict Nightingale believes that today's actors have lost the art of being shocking. Page 18

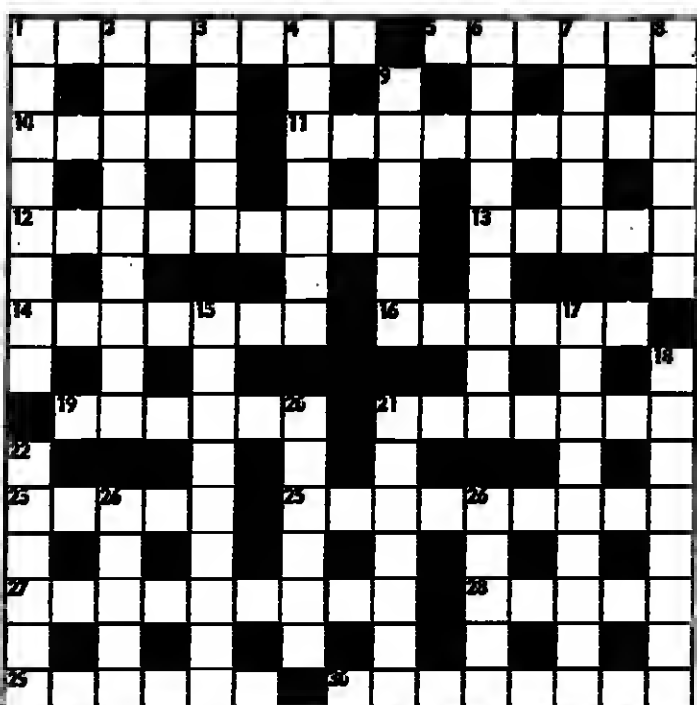
John Birt is criticised by the general

secretary of the National Union of Journalists, defended by Sir Peregrine Worsthorne, Lady Howe and others. Pages 19, 27

The Pentagon's motto after the Cold War could well be: Nothing exceeds like excess. It's clear that no new threat, or combination of threats, can measure up to the old Soviet menace.

The New York Times

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 19,179



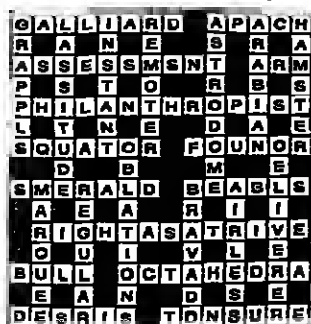
ACROSS

- 1 Wanderer has connection with two states (8)
- 5 Composer achieving a success? (6)
- 10 Companion laid up with this ailment (5)
- 11 The layout of a climatologist's study? (9)
- 12 She's willing to leave things to others (9)
- 13 Furnish quarters directly (5)
- 14 Red admiral saves an agitator (7)
- 16 Hardy serviceman retired penniless (6)
- 19 Fraternize with big noise by hoots (6)
- 21 How to protect source of gopher wood? Nonsense (7)
- 23 Asian king or judge victorious in recurrent sea-fog (5)
- 25 Jonathan darts Ethiopia and Clementine in his shop (9)

DOWN

- 21 Run up loose dress as a temporary measure (9)
- 28 Lightweight woman first to perform on stage (5)
- 29 Forced in this way to cross river to square (6)
- 30 Sadly gone are one's days of long journeys (8)
- 1 One may be given a private address in this case (8)
- 2 It may be noted for sliding up or down (9)
- 3 Tree used in tribal sacrifices (5)
- 4 Northern Ireland adviser beheaded in West Africa (7)
- 6 Carrier for ugly woman with, say, canine travelling companion (8)
- 7 Swift and quiet in surprise attack (5)
- 8 Welshman keeps note of literary output (6)
- 9 House a man erected — a practical 24 (6)
- 15 In first half of programme, name these compositions (9)
- 17 Gaze, say, on container in the well? (9)
- 18 Furniture used when embracing a woman (8)
- 20 Scientist is away in an asylum (6)
- 21 Repeatedly visited by the relative he'd smothered? (7)
- 22 Quick to cut capers during training (6)
- 24 Common fellow, but quite a card (5)
- 26 Lock, but not for a stronghold (5)

Solution to Puzzle No 19,178



TIMES WEATHER

For the latest region by region forecast, 24 hours a day, dial 0800 500 followed by the appropriate code.

Greater London	701	West Midlands	710
East of England	702	East Midlands	711
North East & NW	703	London & Home Counties	712
North West & NW	704	Yorkshire & NW	713
Yorkshire & NW	705	Wales & NW	714
Derby, Derbyshire	706	Wales & NW	715
Derby, Derbyshire	707	Wales & NW	716
Derby, Derbyshire	708	Wales & NW	717
Derby, Derbyshire	709	Wales & NW	718
Derby, Derbyshire	710	Wales & NW	719
Derby, Derbyshire	711	Wales & NW	720
Derby, Derbyshire	712	Wales & NW	721
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Derby, Derbyshire	786	Wales & NW	795
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Derby, Derbyshire	790	Wales & NW	799
Derby, Derbyshire	791	Wales & NW	800

AA ROADWATCH

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LAW 31-35

How lawyers work out their charges

ARTS 37-39

V.S. Naipaul on the latest reward of a writer's life

SPORT 40-44

Football's young generation shows its talents

INVENTING A SMALL BUSINESS
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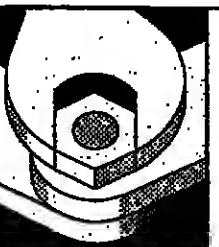
THE TIMES

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TUESDAY MARCH 16 1993

BUSINESS TODAY

REGRESSION



Delta and LMI, two engineers that hoped Continental markets would offset poorer UK demand, report lower 1992 profits.
Page 25, Tempus 27

RELIEF

Lloyd's names will be relieved by a court ruling in a stop-loss test case that offers them relief from their financial plight.
Page 25

RESHUFFLE

Clarks

A reshuffle among shoe companies looks likely after FII's shares were suspended and Berisford said it was looking at C&J Clark.
Page 24

THE POUND

US\$ 1.4330 (-0.0015)
German mark 2.3835 (-0.0052)
Exchange index 77.2 (+0.1)
Bank of England official close (4pm)

STOCK MARKET

FT-SE 100 2322.4 (+8.5)
Dow Jones 3429.44 (+1.62)
Nikkei Avg. 10036.18 (+48.66)

INTEREST RATES

London Bank Base 6%
3-month interbank 6.57%
US Federal Funds 3.75%
3-month Treas Bill 2.55-2.57%
Long Bond 6.91%

CURRENCIES

New York: London: £\$ 1.4345* £\$ 1.4335
\$DM 1.8614* \$DM 1.8594
\$Sfr 1.5215* \$Sfr 1.5205
\$Yen 118.48* \$Yen 118.48
\$ECU 1.0488* \$ECU 1.0488
London Forex market close

GOLD

London Fixing (5): AM 327.90 PM 328.00
Close 328.00-329.10
New York: 329.05-329.55*

RETAIL PRICES

RPI 137.9 January (1.7%)
* Denotes midday trading price

White House approves BA tie with USAir

By MARTIN FLETCHER AND COLIN NARBROUGH

BRITISH Airways yesterday gained the foot in the door of the lucrative North American market it had sought for so long, but the Clinton administration made clear the airline will face big problems in forcing the door open wider.

The US Department of Transportation let stand BA's initial investment of \$300 million in the ailing American airline USAir. However, it attached various awkward conditions and caveats to placate American, Delta and United, the big three US airlines that had lobbied furiously against a deal they said would give BA an unfair advantage on transatlantic routes.

The department approved BA's valuable "code-sharing" and "wet-leasing" arrangements with USAir, but for one year only. The code-sharing agreement will enable BA, effectively to extend USAir's domestic operations into a "seamless service" across the Atlantic by co-ordinating flights and computer reservations. The wet-leasing enables it to use USAir aircraft for flights to London from Pittsburgh and Baltimore, though not between London and a third American hub, Charlotte, North Carolina. The department said it intended to renegotiate the restrictive US-UK aviation agreement to get better terms for US airlines, which want greater access to Heathrow.

The department also said it would launch a formal review of BA's proposed three-phase investment in USAir and strongly suggested that

British Airways finally gained approval for its crucial \$300 million investment in USAir despite strong opposition from the America's three leading carriers

approval of phases two and three, amounting to \$450 million over the next five years, would be contingent on the outcome of those negotiations.

BA's initial \$300 million investment by itself gives it no control over USAir, and Federico Pena, the transportation secretary, called it a "hook" which the administration would use to press the British government into a new bilateral agreement "sometime this year".

"The change in dynamics here allows us to have real negotiations because everyone has made some investment and commitments," he said. Sir Colin Marshall, the BA chairman, expressed immediate delight at the decision.

The strategic stake in USAir was the brainchild of Lord King, the former BA chairman, who saw it as the hook-pin that would finally make BA a truly global operator. Approval from the American authorities comes only five days after finalisation of BA's tie-up with Qantas, the Australian national carrier.

In a cautiously worded statement, Sir Colin said BA looked forward ultimately to linking more domestic USAir flights to its worldwide network. Under the code-sharing deal, BA will wet-lease USAir planes and crew but refurbish them in BA livery.

Initially it will operate a couple of USAir planes on its new direct services from

Garwick to Pittsburgh and Baltimore. Charlotte, it being held up pending formal permission for a route licence.

Robert Crandall, president of American Airlines, told *The Times* last week that code-sharing was the part of the BA-USAir deal that had to be stopped, as it would allow BA to offer products no American carrier could match, giving BA a huge "unfair" advantage. He said BA would be right to push, if the Clinton administration behaved like a "bunch of wimps".

City analysts hailed the American go-ahead to the BA-USAir link-up as an important boost to BA's position in the battle for lucrative long-haul business.

Rival European carriers, such as KLM and SAS, have already established links with American carriers, but the partnerships have nothing like the clout BA-USAir will have in the market.

Even if BA does not go beyond the first phase of its USAir state-building plan, it has secured the crucial code-sharing deal it wanted, one analyst said. In any event, BA has escape clauses beyond the first \$300 million phase.

Mr Pena, who is to meet John MacGregor, his British counterpart, shortly, also said he believed the second two phases of BA's planned investment would require Congress to change the law governing foreign ownership of US airlines.

Pound helps HSBC soar 94%

By PATRICIA TEHAN
BANKING CORRESPONDENT



HSBC Holdings, the parent of Midland Bank, made pre-tax profits of £1.7 billion last year, a 94 per cent advance gained with the help of sterling's devaluation and an exceptional £270 million profit from the sale of its 10 per cent stake in Cathay Pacific.

The dividend increase was higher than forecast at the time of the Midland takeover, up 50 per cent to 19p. HSBC had committed itself to paying a HK\$2 (18p) dividend, but will pay HK\$2.23.

Ignoring the effect of the fall in the value of the pound last year, in Hong Kong-dollar terms, pre-tax profits were 56 per cent higher. Bad debt charges soared from £502 million to £1.18 billion. Midland's bad debts accounted for 47 per cent of the increase, the rest included a £297 million provision against loans to Olympia & York, the troubled Canadian property developer, and a £90 million charge after a review of Concord Leasing's asset portfolio in America. The O&Y provisions account for 60 per cent of HSBC's total exposure. Group operating profits before bad debts rose 104 per cent to £2.59 billion.

The increase in provisions was offset by reduced charges from Marine Midland in America and Hongkong Bank of Australia.

John Bond, who took over as chief executive in January, said the bank had reviewed its lending policies as a result of the O&Y provisions and "it is unlikely that we would take on a major stand alone position of that size in the future".

Mr Bond dismissed fears that the group's figures could be harmed by political problems in Hong Kong. Six months' contributions from Midland provided £184 million of profits, made up of £97 million attributable profits, adjusted to remove restructuring costs, a fall in the value of premises and the profit on the sale of Thomas Cook. Mr Bond said the integration of Midland is making encouraging progress.

Tempus, page 27

Pressure from Peking: A Hong Kong broker shouting during trading yesterday that saw the Hang Seng index fall 353 points. The drop followed China's attacks on Chris Patten, governor of Hong Kong. HSBC Holdings finished weaker, but the company reported a 68 per cent profit rise after the market closed. Right: Richard Delbridge, finance director, left, and John Bond, chief executive.

Man in the news, page 10
Michael Yahuda, page 18

Factory output rise boosts Lamont

By JANET BUSH IN LONDON AND TOM WALKER IN BRUSSELS

THE Chancellor goes into today's Budget armed with increasing evidence that the economy has stabilised and may be starting an anemic recovery, the latest sign being a jump in manufacturing output in January.

The Central Statistical Office (CSO) said yesterday that manufacturing production rose 0.8 per cent in the month, having been unchanged in December from November.

The rise was much larger than the City expected with forecasts centring on a rise of 0.1 per cent. One month's positive manufacturing figure

in a run of sluggish ones is likely to weigh against any temptation for a traditional Budget day cut in interest rates. There remained nervousness yesterday in the financial markets that Norman Lamont would opt for a tighter fiscal than the £2 billion fiscal tightening generally expected.

He received a plea yesterday for a "Budget for growth" from Henning Christophersen, the EC's finance commissioner. The EC having failed to produce a credible growth package for Europe, Mr Christophersen said the Brit-

ish Budget was one of the missing pieces in his strategic jigsaw. Britain could provide the boost Europe needed. "You must make an effort to come up with an investment-led strategy," he said.

Sir John Cope, paymaster general, said the British recovery depended on exports continuing to rise, which in turn depended on demand in the rest of the EC growing.

The CSO said yesterday industrial production as a whole, which includes North Sea oil production as well as other energy and water-supply categories, fell 0.3 per cent in

January, having fallen 0.2 per cent in December.

On the financial markets, sterling drifted a little lower. It closed at 77.2 on its trade-weighted index, compared with 77.3 on Friday. The gilt-edged market, which will be heavily affected by the Chancellor's latest forecast for the public sector borrowing requirement, ended mixed after a dull day with medium gilts a little higher and long gilts a touch lower. On the equity market, the FT-SE 100 index closed 6.5 higher at 2,922.4.

Tempus, page 27

Frightening markets with good news

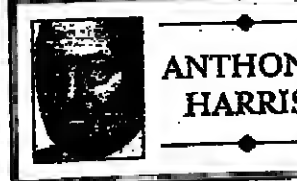
You might think that Norman Lamont can hardly offend everyone today. Whatever fiscal decisions he takes, he will be able to cite respectable advice to do precisely that. Any exchange rate option, from a truly free float to a planned pilgrimage back to Europe, will make somebody happy. He can please industry with cunning tax incentives, or tax-transparency enthusiasts like myself by withholding them. And so on through the list of choices. Add the fact that the economy clearly is recovering; that any nasty side-effects on the trade balance will be largely invisible for some months; and above all that as he knows, whatever he does will have only a marginal effect on this picture, and he may well be singing in his bath even as you read this.

Wait a moment, though. There is one theme in the numerous guesses (or leaks?) that have come out in the last few days which shows a way of turning optimism to dismay, or which suggests, given this government's record, that he will still contrive to make a mess of it. This is the suggestion that he will produce new Treasury forecasts to show that the fiscal crisis that he is supposed to be

confronting is a mirage. The projections for this year were too gloomy, the growth prospect now looks better, and hey presto! Oh dear me.

The question here is not whether the Treasury is at last going to get a forecast right; stranger things have happened, honestly they have. It doesn't matter, though: first, because nobody is likely to believe it; and more important, because even a reliable forecast should be of limited interest to anyone except gits dealers. What to markets and industry want to know is that the government has a strategy. Forecasts are to strategy what charts are to a navigator: no substitute for knowing where you are going.

First, the matter of quality. The last man who needs reminding how bad official forecasts have been recently is Mr Lamont, but he may be hoping that the chastened modellers have now regained their old form, when Treasury projections of growth and inflation were often among the best available from anywhere. But even in



ANTHONY HARRIS

its best years, the Treasury was always bad at one number: its own balance.

Official forecasts of government spending were especially wild, and often for good reasons. The Treasury's main business is not forecasting, but keeping spending departments under control: its spending forecast is therefore a political statement. It cannot afford to admit failure in advance.

The spending departments also play politics, and make pre-emptive claims for funds they may not spend. Revenue flows are also capricious; so a borrowing forecast is a guess at the difference between two large, unpredictable numbers. Result, as often as not, chaos. The last published forecast for this year was some 10 per cent out, with only three months to go. Even the internal forecasts that are sent every month to people like the government broker are often badly out. The damage can range from unnecessary national crises, like

1976, to small flurries in the bill market. All experienced dealers in government paper know this. They also know that year-to-year swings in borrowing tell you much more about the business cycle than they do about the underlying growth of public debt, which is what matters in the long run. At the moment, for example, we are looking at a dive into the red between 1988-9 and 1993-4 that was last put at £50 billion. If Mr Lamont now guesses the swing at £50 billion, the broad picture is the same. And either way, much of this deficit will disappear as the economy recovers—about two thirds of it, if it is as bad as £50 billion. The Chancellor need do nothing about this.

What he does have to make is £18 billion of borrowing that is the result not of the business cycle, but of government decisions. This is the result of spending increases of £12 billion or so, once you clean out the effect of bad inflation forecasts, and tax cuts of £6 billion. If Mr Lamont produces a credible plan to correct this in a reasonable period, even with a slow start, he will get a Clinton vote of confidence from the gits market. But if he simply tries to forecast part of the problem away, watch out.

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FII holds takeover talks with Clarks

■ At least two likely bidders have emerged for Clarks as shareholders of the privately owned shoe company prepare to vote on the future of their beleaguered chairman

By JON ASHWORTH

FII, Britain's second largest footwear manufacturer, is in talks to buy C&J Clark, the privately owned West Country shoe group, for about £150 million.

Shares in FII were suspended at 488p yesterday. The company later confirmed it is in talks which may lead to a substantial acquisition. Sources close to FII confirm Clarks is the subject. Discussions are at an advanced stage but a deal is not imminent.

The talks trigger the prospect of a battle for Clarks, one of Britain's biggest private companies with sales of £600 million a year. Berisford International, the financial holding group, confirmed in a statement that it is "exploring the possibility" of making an offer for Clarks. Electra Investment Trust, the venture capital group, has previously emerged as a potential bidder.

FII, run by Monty Sumray, a well-known figure in the shoe industry, is a principal supplier of shoes to Marks and Spencer. The group last flexed its muscles in August 1986 when it bought Lotus shoes from Burton in a £19 million reverse takeover financed by cash and shares.

A bid for Clarks would be on a substantially larger scale. FII made a pre-tax profit of £6.5 million on sales of £80 million in the year to end-May. Clarks made a pre-tax loss of £3.5 million (£2.5 million profit) in the six months to end-June.

Clarks would not comment yesterday. However, it must disclose details of any potential bids by April 6, giving shareholders enough time to consider them before its annual meeting on April 30.

Talks with FII, now second only to Clarks in UK footwear

manufacturing, have been proceeding since Christmas. The group threw itself open to bidders last year in an attempt to find a solution to a dispute that has split the Clark family down the middle.

Shareholders who attended a stormy meeting in Glastonbury in October were told the company was trying to sell control to an outsider in an effort to end the feud. The plan was to have Electra take a "friendly" 51 per cent stake, leaving no single grouping of Clarks with a majority. At least three further suitors subsequently joined the bidding.

Members of the 1,000-strong Clark family own 70 per cent of the shares with employees, institutions and family trusts accounting for the rest. The 4,100 shareholders have seen the value of their shares fall from £4 to 90p in the face of competition from foreign manufacturers.

Walter Dickson, the non-family chairman, is keen to sell a controlling stake for about £150 million and use the proceeds to promote Clarks internationally. A buyer would be paying for the brands: Clarks Shoes, Ravel and K Shoes in the UK and Bostonian in America.

Mr Dickson's plans triggered the family feud. A motion for his removal, due to be put to shareholders in October, was postponed until next month's AGM.

The acquisition of Lotus made FII the largest supplier of women's shoes to M&S. The company has factories in South Wales, Staffordshire, Northampton and Northern Ireland. Nearly 90 per cent of sales are in the UK with the rest split evenly between Ireland and mainland Europe.



High marks for fashion: Claremont's chairman, Peter Wiegand, left, and David McGarvey, managing director

Acquisitions boost Claremont

By OUR CITY STAFF

CLAREMONT Garments (Holdings), one of Marks and Spencer's main clothing suppliers, lifted pre-tax profits to £8.5 million (£6.3 million) in the year to December 26.

Turnover soared to £81.5 million (£51 million) as a result of the acquisition of J&J Fashions, another M&S supplier, and Alexander Milnes, which makes women's coats and jackets for M&S, C&A and Next.

Peter Wiegand, chairman, said trading conditions remained difficult, but Claremont's strong line of products and its ties with M&S, left the company well positioned to take advantage of any opportunities.

Earnings per share were 16.4p (13.8p). A final dividend of 3.95p a share makes 7.25p for the year. Last year, pro forma dividends totalled 6.5p, which included a special demerger dividend paid by Alexion in lieu of a Claremont interim dividend. The shares rose 5p to 34.5p.

Bigger DNA role for Amersham

By GEORGE SIVELL, CITY EDITOR

AMERSHAM International, the health science group, is to pay up to £48 million for the United States Biochemical Corporation.

The deal places Amersham among the leading players in the DNA sequencing market, which is important in researching diseases such as multiple sclerosis, cystic fibrosis and rheumatoid arthritis.

The deal completes a missing link in Amersham's research ability by adding sequencing to its existing labelling and detection businesses.

The company is issuing 4.6 million shares at 712p to pay for the deal, of which 3.6 million are to be placed by the vendors. Amersham shares stayed at 739p yesterday. A further \$17.25 million is payable for over the next three years, depending on sales targets being met at USB.

Amersham says the USB business will prosper from gaining access to the group's international sales network.

USB is market leader in the North American life science industry in the manufacture and supply of DNA sequencing reagents and kits. Its main product is Sequenase, the leading enzyme for sequencing.

USB is expected to make profits of \$3.6 million in the year to end-April, against \$2.2 million before tax on sales of \$35.7 million in the previous year. At the end of April last year, USB had net assets of \$2.3 million.

Amersham said the acquisition will not dilute its earnings per share. Trading in the second half has remained broadly the same as it was in the first half, when operating profits rose 18 per cent, the group said. Results for the year will reflect only limited benefits of devaluation.

In 1990, Amersham sold its American medical diagnostics business to Eastman Kodak for £84 million.

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Second bid in battle for Brabant

By PHILIP PANGALOS

THE tangled takeover battle raging at the smaller end of the oil and gas exploration sector took another twist after a possible white knight emerged for Brabant Resources.

The USM-quoted oil and gas explorer said it had received a second bid approach, believed to be from a US company.

Brabant already faces an all-paper £7.5 million hostile bid from Aberdeen Petroleum, the US oil and gas production company, which in turn is being stalked by Pittencreeff, of Edinburgh. Aberdeen is offering only shares for Brabant as is Pittencreeff for Aberdeen.

Pittencreeff's bid is "totally inadequate". The Pittencreeff offer is conditional on Aberdeen's bid for Brabant failing. Brabant shares jumped 9p to 53p, against Aberdeen's all-paper offer of 57 1/2p. Aberdeen shares added 4p to 16p and Pittencreeff held steady at 35 1/2p.

MAI advances to £34m at half time

By SARAH BAGNALL

MAI, the money-broker and media group headed by Lord Hollick, the Labour peer, increased pre-tax profits by 12 per cent to £34 million for the six months to end-December 1992.

Growth came mainly from money and securities broking, which boosted profits by 16 per cent to £22 million, and from the sale of financial information, up 78 per cent to £2.1 million. The interim dividend was increased from 1.4p to 2p, to reduce the disparity with the final payment. Lord Hollick said. The shares rose 1p to 184p.

MAI also said that Sir James McKinnon, director-general of the Office of Gas Supply and a former finance director at Imperial Tobacco until its takeover by BAT Industries, was replacing Sir Graham Day as deputy chairman. Sir James is also a non-executive director of Scotia, a private pharmaceuticals company, and a consultant to the World Bank and Argentine and Polish governments. He is also a member of the Financial Reporting Review Panel, the accounting watchdog.

MAI's net assets rose from £150 million to £191 million, helped by the exchange last December of its stake in Avenir Havas Media for a French

franc denominated convertible bond with a current market value of £45 million.

Cash and liquid investments rose £28 million to £184 million. Net cash stands at £56 million after capital expenditure of £38 million, which includes the bulk of the initial investment in Meridian, the ITV licensee for the South and South East. Lord Hollick said the costs incurred before Meridian started broadcasting were capitalised, which along with the costs of purchasing film rights and TV programmes boosted stocks and work in progress from £6.2 million to £25.3 million.



Lord Hollick: lifting payout

Troubled Olivetti plans big cash call

By COLIN NARBROUGH, WORLD TRADE CORRESPONDENT

OLIVETTI, the Italian computer group, has decided to make a rights issue of 903 billion lire (£391 million) after suffering a sharp increase in losses last year, in part due to the lira devaluation. Carlo De Benedetti, the group chairman, said.

The consolidated net loss jumped from 460 billion lire in 1991 to 650 billion, as sales slipped to 802,000 billion lire from 861,000 billion.

Olivetti shares fell 7.5 per cent last week, amid market concern about the group's deteriorating results. The shares were suspended yesterday, ahead of the rights issue announcement. Olivetti said

the proposed capital increase was intended to wipe out debt and boost investment. The funds will be raised through a six-for-four share issue and a six-year convertible bond issue. Group net debt has grown to 960 billion lire, reflecting radical restructuring and the devaluation of the lira last September.

Analysts fear that the deterioration at Olivetti reflects, on a smaller scale, the difficulties that have driven IBM deeply into the red. The size of the Olivetti rights issue is also considered ambitious, given the poor outlook for the sector. Signor De Benedetti said the company would continue

Avesta Sheffield upbeat despite doubled loss

AVESTA Sheffield, one of Europe's leading stainless steel makers, is upbeat about 1993 prospects, despite the poor state of the market. The company, based in Stockholm but 40 per cent owned by British Steel, reported a loss, net of financial items, of \$64 million kronor (£51 million) last year, more than double the 1991 loss. The figures reflected ten months of operations of the Swedish Avesta business alone, and two months including merged parts of British Steel. The British part of the company showed a 46 million kronor loss in November and December.

The devaluation of sterling and the krona are expected to lift sales. But the company, which achieved sales slightly higher at 7.59 billion kronor last year, noted that Germany, its biggest market after Sweden, will worsen this year.

Emess sales decline

WEAKNESS in the construction sector and high interest rates in Germany have hit profits at Emess Lighting. Sales declined to £150 million (£160 million) in 1992 and trading profits fell to £7 million (£10.5 million). Compliance with new accounting rules has required Emess to write off £17 million of goodwill on the £22 million sale of its Tenby subsidiary during the year. The exceptional charge against profits has pushed Emess into a loss for the year of £10.6 million. Under former rules pre-tax profits would have been £6.4 million (£4.2 million). The dividend for the year is cut to 0.1p (1p).

Argos closes pilot shops

ARGOS, the catalogue retailer, is to close its four pilot Chesterman furniture stores because sales have been below expectations. Closure costs, including asset write-offs, provisions for disposal of properties and redundancy costs of about 100 staff are estimated at £12.7 million. The expected tax credit arising is £3.7 million while the costs will be provided in the 1992 accounts when Argos reports on March 22. David Donne, chairman of Argos, said it would have taken "an unreasonably long time for the Chesterman concept to make a significant contribution to profits."

Anglia partnerships

ANGLIA Television has formed three partnerships in America and Europe with Home Box Office (HBO), the programme division of Time Warner Entertainment. Anglia will pay \$3.5 million in two stages to HBO for a 50 per cent interest in Citadel, a supplier of films for US networks and cable channels. HBO will pay Anglia \$1.5 million in two stages for a 50 per cent voting interest in fuel. Anglia's overseas sales and distribution unit, which distributes HBO documentaries. The new partnerships will have headquarters in London and Los Angeles.

Leisure group in black

EUROPEAN Leisure, the discotheque, theme bar and snooker hall group, bounced back from a £46 million loss to a pre-tax profit of £54,000 in the six months to December 31. Last time, the result was weighed down by £45.3 million in exceptional costs and transfers from goodwill reserves. Turnover fell to £35.3 million (£39 million), mainly owing to continued disposals in the entertainment division. There is a loss per share after a "token" preference dividend of 0.65p (£8.60p loss). No dividend on ordinary shares is being paid. The shares rose from 4 1/2p to 5 1/2p.

BPP raises payout

BPP, the financial training and publishing group, lifted pre-tax profits before exceptional costs by 20 per cent to £7.7 million on the back of a 15 per cent rise in turnover to £48.7 million for the year to end-December 1992. Letts Educational and Melrose, both acquired in 1991, contributed £3.4 million in 1992, compared with £0.3 million last time. The final dividend rose from 4.5p to 5.3p, making a year's total of 8p (6.9p). The shares were unchanged at 310p. There was a £650,000 exceptional charge for reorganisation measures, including staff cuts and school closures in Japan and France.

Wiltshire cuts losses

WILTSHIRE Brewery, the subject of a refinancing backed by United Breweries of India at the end of last year, made a £38,000 operating profit in the 12 months to November 30, compared with losses of £207,000 in the previous 14 months. One-off costs and interest payments, however, left pre-tax losses of £979,000, against a £1.39 million loss last time. There is again no dividend, but Vijay Malya, the new chairman, said the intention was to return to a payment as soon as practicable. Wiltshire's name is to be changed to United Breweries.

Sweet result at Vimto

J N Nichols (Vimto), the soft drinks company, made pre-tax profits of £3.4 million (£7.7 million) last year. Turnover was unchanged at £47 million in the year to end-December. Earnings were 35.4p (32.6p) a share. A final dividend of 8.5p (7.7p) a share makes a total of 13.6p (12.3p) a share. UK sales of Vimto and expansion at Nichols Foods added £3 million to turnover. That was offset by the decline of the contract canning market, which affected the performance of Solent Canners, and a fall in export sales of almost £1 million. The shares fell 5p to 52 1/2p.

AMV lifts dividend

NEW business helped send operating profits 5 per cent higher to £4.46 million in the year to end-December at Abbott Mead Vickers, the advertising and marketing group. But lower earnings from interest payments on cash balances of more than £5 million left pre-tax profits of £4.72 million (£5.02 million). A final dividend of 6.5p makes a total of 9.3p (8.4p). David Abbott, the chairman, said the group's two main agencies had won new business worth £50 million in annualised turnover last year. A further £28 million has been won by the group this year. The shares gained 5p to 465p.

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Court ruling gives names right to stop-loss payouts

BY SARAH BAGNALL
INSURANCE CORRESPONDENT

THOUSANDS of cash-strapped Lloyd's names have been given a liquidity boost as a result of a court ruling which stops hundreds of millions of pounds being snapped up by Lloyd's of London to pay off their solvency shortfalls.

Yesterday's commercial court ruling by Mr Justice Tuckey states that names are entitled to receive the payouts on personal stop-loss policies, which cap their losses on any one year of account. In 1989, an estimated 80 per cent of names had stop-loss policies, rising to 90 per cent by 1990. However, the number of policies affected is unknown because those specifying that the funds must be paid into names' premium trust funds are unaffected by the ruling.

Michael Freeman, a solicitor who acted for the names in the stop-loss test case, said the ruling lent support to another fight by names, which involves \$126 million of tax rebates paid earlier this year by the American tax authorities. Mr Freeman said that some members' agents were paying the tax rebates, which relate to losses on the 1988, 1989 and 1990 years of account, into premium trust funds rather than to the names.

Historically, payouts on personal stop-loss policies have been channelled into premium trust funds and used to

As Lloyd's names brace themselves to bear further losses of £2.4 billion on the 1990 account, a court ruling on stop-loss policies eases their cash flow problems

pay off any solvency shortfalls as part of the Lloyd's requirements that each name has to have sufficient assets held at Lloyd's to meet future losses.

The ruling will ease the cash flow problems of names who are already struggling under the weight of the £2.06 billion losses for the 1989 year of account, reported last year under Lloyd's three year accounting rules. Names are now bracing themselves for further losses, to be announced in June, which estimates last week put at a record £2.4 billion.

As a result of the ruling names can now use the proceeds as they like. If a bank is putting pressure on a name to sell assets in order to meet losses the funds can be used instead. "Or they can go on a round the world trip," Mr Freeman said.

Early estimates put the losses from the weekend's storms, which swept through the US leaving a trail of destruction and damage in 12 states, in the region of "hundreds of millions" of dollars.

A Lloyd's spokesman said an accurate figure would not be available for several days because the damage was so

widespread but it was likely to be far less than the \$17 billion cost of Hurricane Andrew, the biggest insurance loss ever, which hit Florida last year.

Jim Welsh, a claims consultant at Property Claims Services in the US, said he expected the highest claims to come from Florida, hit by tornadoes, strong winds, flooding and hail. The effects on the state's vast citrus crops are yet not known. Heavy claims are also expected from Georgia and South Carolina, which, along with sizes stretching all the way to the Canadian border, were hit by heavy snows and strong winds.

A lot of business interruption losses in the south will not be insured because the weather is stopping people from getting to work, rather than the damage to property.

Lloyd's and UK companies have provided cover for catastrophes but their level of exposure is not yet known. However, General Accident, Royal Insurance and Commercial Union are thought to have the largest corporate exposure to the storms, which have been given the title of Cat 46.



More confident frame of mind: Robert Easton, the chief executive of Delta, has seen some signs of recovery and a rise in exports this year

Engineers wary of continental recession

BY MARTIN WALLER, DEPUTY CITY EDITOR

TWO of Britain's biggest specialist engineers have highlighted the difficulties of manufacturing industry by reporting lower 1992 profits while giving warning of the effects of a threatened downturn in important European markets such as Germany.

IMI, which is keen to keep to its acquisition programme to take advantage of low prices during recession, saw pre-tax profits drop by £5.2 million to £68 million. It blamed higher interest payments and a loss from the titanium business, which was hit by weak aerospace markets.

Pre-tax profits for the year to end-December at Delta fell from £64.1 million to £55

million after substantial restructuring costs during the third year of recession in Britain, which coincided with continuing difficulties in many of the group's overseas markets.

Both companies are maintaining fully covered dividends. IMI paying a final of 5.8p, for a total of 10p, and Delta a final of 9.8p, for a 14p total.

IMI saw a further record profit from its drinks dispensing equipment division and a marginal improvement from building products, but special engineering eased by £2 million to £12 million at the operating level and fluid power dropped from £22.2 million

to £16.9 million. The latter is the most likely area for an acquisition, said Gary Allen, the chief executive, after a proposed purchase of a valves and control systems business fell through last month. IMI is considering candidates and is prepared to see gearing double to 50 per cent, which would provide £100 million for expansion.

He said there was little hard evidence in IMI's figures to suggest that the British economy was recovering: it would take time for the benefits of lower interest rates to flow through.

Continental economies were in decline. "One of my great strategic thrusts at IMI was to

take it into Europe, and it's done very well in the past, but we're seeing Italy, Spain, the Benelux and particularly Germany with the sort of recessionary problems we've got used to here," Mr Allen said.

IMI shares were marked up 11p to 270p on the profits statement, which came in about £2 million ahead of expectations.

Delta, is also giving a warning that its continental markets are set to remain flat, although the building materials market in Germany is unlikely to decline at the rate of the rest of the economy because of demand in the east. Pre-tax profits at the cables

division fell by £4.4 million to £8.7 million; two thirds of that decline accounted for by restructuring costs in America. Losses continued at Delta's Strupent American cable operation.

Robert Easton, the chief executive, said the chaos that accompanied Britain's exit from the exchange-rate mechanism had meant a loss of confidence on the part of the company's customers, and a difficult last quarter, although the first couple of months of 1993 had seen restocking, some recovery and a rise in exports. Delta shares rose 9p to 444p.

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Bumpy ride for China Clays

BY GEORGE SIVELL, CITY EDITOR

ANDREW Teare, chief executive of English China Clays, the building materials and industrial minerals group, says the "aura of confidence" that is building up in the British economy is a little early. We have seen this for each of the past three years. He believes the economy is on a "corrugated bottom".

America, however, is improving. English China Clays has doubled its proportion of sales there from 20 per cent to 39 per cent in the space of two years and is looking for a further acquisition there.

The group suffered a fall in pre-tax profits from £115.4 million to £86.2 million in the year to end-December. The total dividend is maintained at 20p despite earnings falling from 31.25p to 21.87p a share. The board took the unusual step of promising to "at least equal" 20p for 1993

"in the absence of unforeseen circumstances".

The company is also keeping a close eye on the German economy because of its influence on paper demand, an important consumer of Eng-



Teare: cautious

lish China Clays minerals. The group is also looking at business prospects around the Pacific Rim, including Taiwan and Indonesia, while China will also be considered.

Despite a rise in debts from £40.3 million to £172.8 million during the year, the English China Clays balance sheet is much stronger. Gearing is down from 64.5 per cent to 26.2 per cent thanks to the £209 million cash call in February to redeem auction market preferred stock.

English China Clays has charged an exceptional £14.3 million for 1992 to cover the writedown of British housing land and rationalisation costs offset by a £2.2 million pension credit. The group enjoyed an extraordinary £14 million profit on the sale of Haul-Waste and IDF International.

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Weak markets hit Laporte

BY PATRICIA TEHAN

LAPORTE, the chemicals group, saw pre-tax profits fall 10 per cent to £86.6 million last year, under the impact of depressed conditions in world chemicals markets.

The figure was in line with forecasts in January, when Laporte made its £130 million agreed bid for Evode, the glue-maker.

Profits were helped by an eight-and-a-half month contribution from Rockwood, the American construction chemi-

cals group, acquired in April last year, and by an increased contribution from the Inerox peroxy business acquired after Laporte's joint venture with Solvay was dismantled last May.

Ken Minton, chief executive, repeated his promise that the Evode acquisition would enhance earnings in the current year. He said the integration of Evode was running smoothly. The merger of head office functions would save £3

million a year. Bidding for Evode cost the company £8 million in professional fees. He said Laporte intended to keep 80 per cent of Evode's businesses, by turnover; there had been approaches from potential buyers for non-core operations.

The dividend for the year rises by 3 per cent, to 19.5p. Earnings per share fell from 40p to 39.2p. Mr Minton said there were signs of improvement in the trading climate.

Rugby Group holds profits and payout

BY OUR CITY STAFF

RUGBY Group, one of Britain's big three cement producers, is not looking for any upturn in the housing market to restore the building industry's fortunes this year.

Rugby, with pre-tax profits barely changed at £57.6 million (£57.3 million) in the year to end-December, believes it can count on a more dramatic upturn in America and Australia, which had already

shown signs of improvement in 1992. The total dividend is held at 6.45p, with a final payment of 3.6p.

Geoffrey Higham, the chairman, said the recession in Britain continued to depress sales, and profits in the second half were substantially below those in the first six months.

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Watmoughs profits bounce back

LONG-term contracts for colour magazines helped Watmoughs (Holdings), the printer, to lift pre-tax profits to £12.2 million for the year to December after the fall in 1991 to £8 million (£11.6 million). Earnings per share rose from 20p to 26p and the dividend is 11.5p (10.1p). Sales were up from £107 million to £118 million and operating margins improved by a percentage point.

Patrick Walker, chairman, said about 60 per cent of sales were five-year or one-year rolling contracts for leading titles such as *The Sunday Times* colour supplement, *You* magazine, *Cosmopolitan* and *Marie Claire*.

Watmoughs, which expects to start production in Spain next month of the Spanish magazine *Hola* and its English edition, *Holla*, forecast income of £15 million from Spanish operations this year. In Britain, it has won the contract for *Sunday*, the *News of the World* colour supplement, expected to bring in £9 million in 1994. Watmough's gearing is 29 per cent.

In the black

Better grass-growing weather throughout Europe and tight cost controls helped Ransomes, the grass-cutting machinery maker, return to the black with a pre-tax profit of £900,000 in the year to end-December, compared with a loss of £4.6 million last time. Annual sales advanced 6.7 per cent to £156.6 million.

There was an exceptional charge of £1.8 million, relating to a writedown of assets on the transfer of the Brouwer operation from Canada to the US. The loss per share is reduced to 9p (17.3p). There is again no ordinary dividend. The shares rose 3p to 31p.

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	1992	1991
	£m	
Turnover	785.9	774.0
Profit before tax	55.0	64.1
Earnings per share	23.0p	27.0p
Ordinary dividend	14.0p	14.0p

Copies of the Annual Report & Accounts for the year ended 2nd January 1993, from which the above is an extract, are available from 25th March from the Secretary, Delta plc, 1 Kingsway, London WC2B 6XJ. Telephone 071-836 3535.

ENGINEERING • INDUSTRIAL SERVICES

For Clinton's version of free trade, read the small print

Otfang Münchau says Europe should note that the presidential advisers' views range from liberalism to outright protectionism.

Despite the surprising sure-footedness in its general economic policy, the Clinton administration has displayed distinct signs of wobble when it comes to trade. It may not affect the approval ratings, but it worries America's trading partners none the less.

Yesterday's qualified endorsement of "ish Airways' ambitions to widen its istness activities in the US may be interpreted as a sign of goodwill, but it is so last Friday's cancellation of incitation talks with the EC to solve a dural procurement dispute in the lecommunications sector. The president's accusations against Europe's irtus consortium contained no sign of goodwill, and what does one make of is subsequent retraction, that he did not mean it the way he had said it? Or f the widely leaked proposed clamp-downs on foreign utility vehicles and univans?

Officially, nothing has changed. resident Clinton has underlined his ndorsement of free trade in a recent peech, calling on Americans to "comete not retreat". The rhetoric was typically grand, but one would do well o beware of the small print.

Small print is not the stuff of residents but of advisers, and here one letects all sorts of conflicting shades of rey inside the administration, ranging from trade liberalism to outright protectionism.

In between are the "moderate free raders", a construction almost worth ncluding in the dictionary of the politically correct, and then there are the trade sceptics. The problem is that the president endorses the concept of free trade in principle, but he is surrounded by advisers who do not necessarily see eye to eye on this issue, and proffer conflicting advice.

The internal debate in the administration is perhaps best illustrated by a series of exchanges that took place less than two years ago between two of the president's most trusted lieutenants, Robert Reich, now the labour secretary, and Laura D'Andrea Tyson, who chairs the president's Council of Economic Advisers.

In his much-acclaimed book, *The Work of Nations*, Dr Reich defended an open trading system and described how the US government panders to the special interests of the country's large corporations, and how these corporations sought protective walls to cover up their own shortcomings.

He wrote: "It was said that foreigners were 'dumping' their wares in the United States — a term conjuring up images of huge piles of substandard consumer durables and cheap novelty items littering American beaches. In fact, dumping described nothing more than foreign producers acting exactly as would any self-respecting competitor who wished to sell in large quantity: offer a cut-rate price from the very first sale onward, sometimes even taking a loss in anticipation of making money later after gaining scale efficiencies."

These words, uttered in the context of an intellectual treatise on economic policy and not during a stormy cabinet session, may come to haunt him in the light of future US trade policy, which may look nothing like his own vision at all.

In an article in *The American Prospect*, an academic policy journal, Ms Tyson presented a highly critical review of the book, especially on Dr Reich's assertion that business was already so international that trade sanctions would return like a boomerang "at best premature".

She added that "the economic fate of nations is still tied closely to the success of the domestically based corporations... Many foreign markets are highly regulated, often to America's disadvantage. Consequently, America cannot just foster the best possible workforce and then rely on market forces to bring high-wage jobs to our shores".

Dr Reich's response was one of dismay. In an article in the same journal, he complained: "I found myself the recipient of expressions of shock and outrage from several fellow industrial-policy travellers who accused me of abandoning the worthy cause. And now to deepen my gloom, comes Laura Tyson."

But for those spirited free traders there is more gloom to come. For Ms Tyson is not your typical whingeing Democrat or protectionist, but an academic who has spent a considerable part of her career trying to prove rigorously that upholding the maxim of free trade can be damaging to the American economy under certain circumstances.

Her essential contention is that the neoclassical free trade theory does not hold true in every situation. The theory says broadly that a country is better off if it upholds the principles of free trade even if its trading partners do not. Ms Tyson's central contention is that while this may be true in general, it does not apply to every industry, and especially not to high-technology industries, which are characterised by massive government intervention, long-term research and development programmes and high barriers to entry.

And it is here that the shades of grey enter. A clue to what may happen lies in her own book on this issue, *Trade Conflict in High Technology Industries*. She distinguishes between free traders and moderate free traders, and sceptics. "A dwindling number of economists and very few policy makers espouse the traditional free trade arguments as an overall prescription for US trade policy," she claims. Instead they fall into the category of "moderate" free traders, which means free traders in the context of an "ideal world" but not in the real world. In a frank statement on this issue she declares that she belongs in neither of these two, but to a third category, that of the "cautious activists". "My trade policy agenda is a defensive one," she writes. "I recommend that the nation's trade laws be used to deter or compensate for foreign practices that are not adequately regulated by existing multilateral laws." Thus speaks President Clinton's chief economic adviser. Cautious activism, she says, is not synonymous with protectionism, the darkest shade in this curious spectrum of greys.

The most important point about Ms Tyson's policy prescription is the link between industrial policy and trade policy. This is reflected in the president's aggressive rhetoric towards Europe's Airbus consortium. He acknowledges that Airbus has damaged Boeing and McDonnell Douglas, the two indigenous aircraft makers, and is therefore under pressure "to do something". On the other hand, Airbus serves almost as a role model for the new administration's own industrial policy. The Democrats' obsession with Airbus belies a deep-down admiration, namely that you can back the market and still be successful.



Cautious activist: Laura D'Andrea Tyson, Mr Clinton's adviser

So where does this leave future US trade policy? Mr Clinton's rhetoric is of little help here, especially so since his words tend to be tailored to the specific audience he addresses.

The administration will eventually have to come clean on its trade policy, and an early test will be the talks to reach a supplementary deal on the North American Free Trade Agreement (Nafta). These talks begin tomorrow but Congressional leaders have already warned that the treaty is "in serious trouble", and Mickey Kantor, the US trade representative, even threatened "to walk away from the table". If the US does not get what it wants.

His words may be characteristic of America's strongman approach to trade policy. In substance, it will resemble Ms Tyson's "cautious activism", but it will not bear that name. This is where Robert Reich comes in. The policy will come to be known as "free trade".

More cynical among them to open their chequebooks for international relief aid and Third World development. Care, the largest relief charity in the world, is setting up a Care City Committee to attract volunteers from the Square Mile. Simon Taylor Young, an assistant director of corporate stockbroking at NatWest WoodMac, has joined Liz Kirkham of Care to organise an "inaugural" meeting of the new committee tomorrow at 6:30pm in the boardroom of Ernst & Young's Rolls Building on Peter Lane. Knowledge of the City's intricate workings, and a fat contacts book, would clearly not be a disadvantage.

Taurus revisited
MUCH of British industry supported the Stock Exchange's ill-fated Taurus settlement system, but few, it seems, were more bullish than Heywood Williams, the west Yorkshire glass distributor. Shareholders in the company were amused yesterday to receive an upbeat, glossy promotional leaflet telling them how much they would benefit from the new system and how it "will have been rigorously tested before it comes into use". Ronald Sansom, a Heywood shareholder for 30 years, said: "As you could imagine, I was somewhat tickled to find this with my annual report." The leaflet was sent out by Heywood on Friday morning. "We knew about the collapse on Thursday night, but it was too late to stop the mailing," a Heywood spokeswoman explained.

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where they are unable to afford litigation to recover monies from their stop loss insurers against contracts honourably entered into on their part.

They have already enough on their hands covering their calls, subscribing to the various action groups, paying the central levy, and dealing with all the other financial demands that membership of Lloyd's now unfortunately imposes on them.

Unless the syndicates and the stop loss insurers come together to resolve this, potentially, very damaging situation, many names will run out of funds and Lloyd's will lose its capital base.

It is the names who allow Lloyd's to continue to operate by honourably and promptly paying up against each call. It is now the turn of Lloyd's to ensure that the same treatment — no more, no less — is given to them.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN STRAFFORD,
Strangers Drift,
Weston-on-the-Green,
Bicester,
Oxfordshire.

Equality of retirement fringe benefits needed

From Mr David Lea
Sir, Graham Searjeant's excellent article (March 10) about equalisation of the retirement age for state pensions, as between men and women, fails to mention one important aspect: I refer to the discrimination against men, not only with regard to the pension, but the fringe benefits.

In London, for example, a woman who, like myself, is retired from a university post, becomes eligible at the age of 60 not only for her state pension in addition to that from the university's retire-

ment plan but, also, for the very considerable benefit of free travel on London Transport and, of course, additional health service concessions such as exemption from prescription charges. Women retired from the civil service are in the same enviable position.

When can we hope for legislation to give at least the fringe benefits to retired men at the age of 60?

Yours faithfully,
DAVID LEA,
109 Albert Street,
NW1.

Stop loss delays threaten Lloyd's

From Mr John Strafford
Sir, Preliminary figures indicate that the 1990 results at Lloyd's of London will be as bad, if not worse, than those for 1989.

On top of this, there is now another extremely worrying development for names, namely the extreme delays in settlement of stop loss claims. Names are still, in fact, waiting for settlement against calls made last year, and they are now being advised of a strong possibility of similar delays after next July, when the 1990 account is due for settlement.

Names are now being advised that, unless Mr Middleton can resolve this situation within the next two months, they will have no option other than as individuals to go to litigation to recover their legitimate stop loss claims.

Many names would not have joined Lloyd's in the first place without the umbrella of stop loss to cushion their calls at time of due settlement, and now that is being denied them. Names, despite what some may think, do not have unlimited funds, and many are now stretched to the point

MONTHLY manufacturing figures are notoriously volatile, but news of a 0.8 per cent jump in output in January is an important piece of ammunition for Norman Lamont if, as many suspect, he is planning to deliver a package of fiscal tightening measures this afternoon. Coupled with the strong rise in retail sales in January, these are the surest signs yet that the successive cuts in interest rates are taking effect and the economy is improving.

The Treasury's assumption may well be that this recovery is sufficiently robust to withstand a judicious, and heavily disguised, package of tax increases. The equity market will watch most closely to see where any increases in indirect taxes will fall. The Chancellor can raise perhaps £2 billion from VAT and excise duty increases without endangering the 4 per cent inflation target.

The burden is likely to fall most heavily on

the motor sector as Mr Lamont gave notice in his Autumn Statement. Petrol and vehicle excise duties are both likely to rise. This should not hurt the recovery in car sales too badly, since the autumn tax cut is still making car prices look attractive.

Other sectors of the stock market, notably media and food retailing, have been suffering for more than a month over fears that the VAT base will be widened, and shares have largely assumed the worst. Expect an immediate bounce if the Chancellor takes no action.

The market as a whole is likely to welcome a fiscally tight Budget, particularly if it is combined with some commitment to another base rate cut, and an indication that the PSBR would not, in any case, have been quite so bad as feared. All these will allay remaining fears of funding difficulties later in the year, which is the main factor preventing long gilt yields falling below 8 per cent.

HSBC
INVESTORS should be thankful that HSBC was forced to provide almost £300 million against Olympia & York last year. It should remind the bank's management that it is as prone to mistakes as its rivals, and encourage caution.

None of the many ways of looking at HSBC's 1992 figures disguises the powerful growth in the Hong Kong business and rapid recovery elsewhere. Even on a pro-forma basis in Hong Kong dollars, which ignores the effects of sterling's devaluation, earnings rose 92 per cent to HK\$5.72.

The picture would change if the Hong Kong economy slowed. The Asia Pacific region still provides more than three quarters of profits. Un-

derlying bad debt provisions were only 0.3 per cent of assets while the return on assets was 2.1 per cent in the region. Such a banking return may not be sustainable, but earnings growth of up to a fifth is possible in the region this year if the Hong Kong economy continues to ex-

pand at more than 5 per cent. Coupled with further recovery in Britain and America, the group could produce earnings of 60p this year, a 22 per cent rise. The shares have outperformed the sector wildly since devaluation, but are still not overpriced on a near-5 per cent forward yield.

Rugby Group
RUGBY Group is an atypical specimen to start this year's building materials reporting season. It has cash in the bank, a well-covered dividend and a cautious approach to corporate life which has helped the group weather the unprecedented severity of the latest of many downturns in the industry.

The decline in profits from last year was counterbalanced by strong improvements overseas to leave a flat profits outturn which shows that even the best-run building materials producer can do little to cushion itself from the slump.

There are signs that the industry may be seeing the last of the price freezes: sterling's depreciation is pushing up the price of imported raw materials and other parts of the industry are in no shape to absorb a further assault on margins.

Meanwhile, the group has a potentially useful third leg to its traditional cement and joinery operations, the Ward structural steel business

neutralises the impact of the goodwill writedown and of taking on \$6.5 million of USBC's debt. The long-term aim is to automate research into how DNA changes cause auto-immune diseases. Shareholders must hope they benefit more from this than from Amersham, the diagnostic business, which proved so expensive to develop that it had to be sold to Eastman Kodak in 1990.

Amersham
IN its first share issue since its spectacular privatisation in 1982, Amersham International is filling a missing link in its research chain. But the deal, which cleverly adds DNA sequencing to Amersham's labelling and detection products, has its price. At \$69 million, United States Biochemical Corporation is being bought at 19 times earnings and on a 2,500 per cent premium to net assets.

This ignores the valuable patents associated with the Sequenase enzyme and related biological processes. By issuing £33 million of shares to the vendors, Amersham

one indication of the many bid stories rumbling around the building materials sector is that English China Clays feels obliged to make a commitment to maintain this year's dividend, when the 1992 payout was covered only 1.09 times, especially since it admits that European markets are unlikely to show much progress.

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TEMPUS

Time to tighten a little

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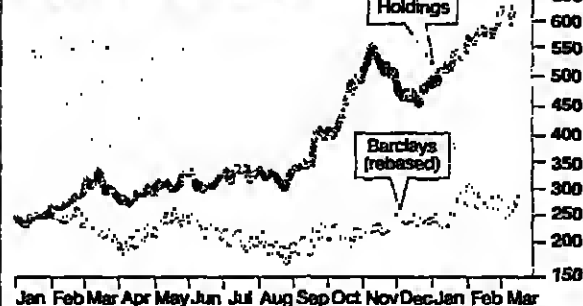
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EASTERN PROMISE



THE TIMES CITY DIARY

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MELINDA WITTSTOCK

JOIN UP THE DOTS.

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CGS bids for remainder of Hoskyns

Directors say £137m offer is reasonable

By PHILIP PANGALOS

CAP Gemini Soged, the French computer services giant, is taking full control of Hoskyns Group, the British computer services group, through a recommended £136.6 million offer for the remaining 30.7 per cent shareholding it does not already own.

CGS's unconditional cash offer is at 46p a share. CGS, which is Europe's biggest computer services company employing 20,000 people worldwide, bought some 69 per cent of Hoskyns from GEC/Siemens in summer 1990, after an unconditional cash offer of 330p a share, and at that time said it would offer to buy the remaining shares in 1993.

Under the offer, which is being made by Hoare Govett, Hoskyns shareholders will also receive a final dividend of 1.65p a share, payable on March 16.

Hoskyns directors, who have been advised by Schroders, said they consider the terms of the offer to be "fair and reasonable" and have recommended that shareholders accept the offer.

Geoff Unwin, chairman of Hoskyns and a president of Cap Gemini Soged, said: "The majority stake held by Cap Gemini Soged in Hoskyns since August 1990 has been of tremendous benefit to both companies. Hoskyns has already seen many of the advantages of being part of Europe's largest computer services group and CGS is benefiting from Hoskyns' expertise, particularly in outsourcing. When the offer has been completed Hoskyns will continue to play a leading role in the global development of CGS."

but some argue that it sees another of Britain's computer companies going into foreign hands, marking the end of yet another chapter for the UK computer services industry. It leaves only the likes of smaller and mid-sized computer service groups quoted, such as Logica, Misys and ACT.

However, Hoskyns stresses that the move was expected and is merely part of the group's ongoing strategy to compete in the European and worldwide market, which has heavyweights such as IBM, Computer Associates, Andersen Consulting and EDS, which now owns Britain's SD-Scicon.

Computer services companies have felt the squeeze, as computer users matured and have taken a tougher line towards budgets as the recession forced more customers to secure greater productivity from their existing spending on information technology.

Tony Robinson, joint managing director of Hoskyns, said Hoskyns has been part of CGS for the last couple of years, during which time CGS has been a "strategic assembler" in Europe. "We are now going through a process of strategic integration, co-ordinating about a dozen different companies into one European group able to compete with the other big players. You could look at it as exporting British management and British ideas to Europe," he said.

In a very competitive and, at times, hostile environment, Mr Robinson said there was not yet any significant easing of trading conditions. He said conditions were not getting any worse, but nor were they much easier. "Our revenue and our profits are growing, but that's after much hard work," he added.

Hoskyns shares gained 6p to 46p.



Mutual advantage: Geoff Unwin, Hoskyns' chairman, says the link between the firms since August 1990 has been of tremendous benefit to both

JIB dips in year after flotation

By SARAH BAGNALL, INSURANCE CORRESPONDENT

FALLING interest rates, a sharp rise in administrative expenses and shrinking capacity in the London reinsurance market resulted in a £2 million drop in 1992 pre-tax profits to £18.2 million at JIB Group. Shares in the international insurance broker that came to the market in November 1991, advanced 2p to 184p, compared with a flotation price of 195p. The final dividend stays at 5p, for a total of 7.5p, the amount JIB said it would have paid last time had it been a public company for a full year. The actual 1991 payout was 5p.

Rodney Leach, chairman, said 1992 had been a difficult year but that the outlook for 1993 was "encouraging". Despite a 4 per cent increase in turnover to £176 million for the year to end-December, operating profits fell by a fifth to £18.9 million due to an £11 million rise in expenses to £176 million and lower interest rates, which reduced investment income by £1.2 million to £19.3 million.

Hardest hit were the reinsurance division, which saw profits fall to £7.3 million (£10.7 million), and the Lloyd's members' agency, which lost £1.8 million (£362,000 profit). American losses depressed retail profits 23 per cent to £6.2 million.

Piggott backs plan to spur on Flat racing

By JON ASHWORTH

RACING enthusiasts with money to spare are being offered an investment scheme with a difference. For £3,600, they can enjoy a season of Flat racing with a country house hotel thrown in. There is a chance to share in any prize money and they may even catch a glimpse of Lester Piggott.

Racing for Pleasure, as the scheme is known, is a variation on the racing syndicate, in which ten or 20 wealthy punters club together to buy a horse, and split any winnings. The scheme is a step down from a syndicate but a big step up from the teams in which several thousand enthusiasts put £100 or so each.

David Allan, an owner, breeder and bloodstock manager, dreamed up the idea to put some life back into the racing industry.

Mr Allan's company, Allan Bloodlines, takes £300 per team membership as his fee plus 10 per cent of prize money or other surpluses when the club is wound up. Susan Piggott will train some of the horses.

Racing, page 41

GM chief pulls out of VW deal

By COLIN NARBROUGH

GENERAL Motors' purchasing chief, J Ignacio Lopez de Arriortua, who resigned last week to move to Volkswagen, Europe's biggest carmaker, was persuaded over the weekend to stay at GM.

A VW spokesman said Senior Lopez had signed a contract to join the German carmaker this month but had asked not to be held to it. Senior Lopez and VW have agreed to decide within a year on his joining VW later. The surprise reversal prompted Ferdinand Piech, VW management board chairman, to attack "continuous intervention" by GM to keep Senior Lopez, who is credited with having saved \$1 billion off GM's car components bill, in Detroit.

He said Piech had hoped Senior Lopez would help VW to effect an urgently needed improvement in its own cost structure. VW shares dropped more than DM4 to DM288.50 in Frankfurt on the news. It is understood Senior Lopez, 52, who was said to have been offered a \$15 million contract by VW, was lured back to GM for the second time this year by promotion to executive vice-president.

Share offer by David Lloyd is a smash hit

THE offer for sale of shares in David Lloyd Leisure, the company headed by the former Davis Cup tennis player David Lloyd, was nearly seven times oversubscribed. Most investors will not receive their full applications. Only those who asked for 200 shares will be satisfied in full. But nearly all can look forward to a premium of between 15p and 20p on their 150p shares when dealing starts on Friday, analysts believe.

About 99 per cent of applicants will receive some shares and 44 per cent will receive 50 per cent of what they asked for. People who applied for 400, 500 or 600 shares will receive half their application while people who wanted 800 will receive 300 shares. Applicants for 1,000 will get 350.

Applications for between 1,500 and 5,000 shares will get 30 per cent, between 6,000 and 10,000 will receive 20 per cent and 20,000 to 70,000 will receive 10 per cent. Applications for more than 70,000 will receive nothing. Share certificates will be sent out tomorrow as will cheques for shares not allocated.

BAT match

BAT Industries, the tobacco and financial services group, has signed a joint-venture agreement to take over a cigarette factory in Ukraine. BAT will have 65 per cent and the rest will be owned by Collective Enterprise Priklucki Tobacco Factory. The plant accounts for more than 18 per cent of Ukrainian production. The new company plans to invest more than \$35 million dollars. Ukrainians buy up to \$0 billion cigarettes a year.

Metalrax up

Metalrax, the engineering and storage-equipment group, increased pre-tax profits from £7.2 million to £7.3 million in the year to December 31 despite a fall in turnover from £63 million to £60 million. However, a higher tax charge depressed earnings per share, down from 6.93p to 6.81p. The annual dividend rises 12 per cent to 4p and shareholders will receive a bonus issue of one share for every ten held.

Peck advances

Peck, the electronic traffic-control and field data-systems group, lifted pre-tax profits 17.7 per cent to £7.13 million in the year to end-December, on turnover up 5.1 per cent to £88.8 million. There is an extraordinary gain of £3.42 million. Earnings climb to 4.2p (3.6p) a share. The total dividend is maintained at 3.4p for the year, with an unchanged final payout of 2.35p. The shares added 2p to 79p.

HSBC Holdings plc 1992 Results Performance continued to improve

For the year	1991 £m	1992 £m	% +
Group profit before tax	880	1,710	94
Profit attributable to shareholders	586	1,221	108
Per share	Pence	Pence	
Earnings	36.06	62.07	72
Dividends	12.71	19.00	49
At year-end	£m	£m	
Shareholders' funds	4,819	8,011	66
Capital resources	6,789	13,975	106
Assets	85,786	170,450	99

Comparative figures for 1991 have been amended to conform with the current year's presentation following the disclosure of the Group's inner reserves in 1992.

"Although economic growth in Asia was robust, the continuing recession in several of our major markets made 1992 quite a difficult year, and resulted in a significant increase in the level of provisioning. In these circumstances, the Group's results are satisfactory.

The acquisition of Midland Bank was a very significant development in the history of the HSBC Group. Integrating Midland into the Group is a major priority for 1993 and I am pleased to report that the progress so far has been encouraging.

The continuing improvement in the Group's performance is closely linked to the outlook for the world economy in 1993. The economy in the US is gradually recovering, but economic prospects in the UK and much of the rest of Europe are less encouraging. We are determined to continue to develop our business in Asia, which contains some of the world's fastest-growing economies and where we have an unrivalled position."

Sir William Purves, Group Chairman

The HSBC Group's performance continued to improve in 1992. In addition to the inclusion of Midland Bank for the first time since its acquisition in July, the growth in profits during 1992 reflects improved results from all the major members of the Group. In particular, increases were achieved by Hongkong Bank, Hang Seng Bank and The British Bank of the Middle East. Both Marine Midland Bank and Hongkong Bank of Australia returned to profitability.

The information in this announcement does not comprise statutory accounts within the meaning of section 240 of the Companies Act 1985. The statutory accounts for the year ended 31 December 1992, which contain an unqualified auditor's report and do not constitute a statement under section 237(2) or (3) of the Act, will be delivered to the Registrar of Companies in England and Wales in accordance with section 242 of the Act.

Copies of the full results announcement may be obtained from Group Public Affairs, 10 Lower Thames Street, London EC3R 6AE, United Kingdom or 99 Bishopsgate, London EC2P 2LA, United Kingdom. The 1992 Annual Report and Accounts will be sent to shareholders in mid-April.

HSBC Holdings plc

Incorporated in England with limited liability
Registered in England: number 617987
Registered Office and Group Head Office: 10 Lower Thames Street London EC3R 6AE, United Kingdom



Enthusiastic supporters: Susan and Lester Piggott

Wassall powers to £17.8m

By GEORGE SIVELL
CITY EDITOR

WASSALL, the mini-conglomerate, ended 1992 with net cash of £31 million and, after the failure of its bid for Evode, is on the look out for further acquisitions.

The cash is acting as a drag on Wassall's earnings and the company needs to make a bid to keep up its earnings momentum. Chris Miller, chief executive, said: "That is why the institutions hold our shares." The high values put on stock market companies at present mean it is likely that Wassall's next acquisitions could be private companies.

Profits before tax rose 73 per cent to £17.8 million during 1992, thanks to the acquisition of DAP in North America, in 1991 and a rise of 17 per cent among Wassall's other business. Brokers expect profits before tax of £26 million this year.

The total dividend rises 25 per cent to 2.5p, as forecast during the failed bid for Evode, out of earnings per share up 15 per cent to 10p. Dividend cover is expected to fall slowly in the future.

Mr Miller said the outlook on both sides of the Atlantic was good, with signs of recovery particularly in America.

NATIONAL MUTUAL LIFE

Notice of Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the 163rd Annual General Meeting of National Mutual Life Assurance Society will be held at the registered office of the Society, The Priory, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG5 2DW on Friday, 23 April, 1993, at noon for the following purposes:

1. to receive the Directors' Report, the Accounts for 1992 and the Auditors' Report thereon;
2. to re-elect Directors;
3. to approve the rates of Directors' remuneration;
4. to re-appoint the Auditors and to authorise the Directors to fix their remuneration;

A member qualified to vote at the above meeting is entitled to appoint a proxy to attend and vote on a poll instead of him. A proxy need not be a member of the Society.

E. J. S. MILLER, Secretary
16 March 1993

By order of the Board

Portfolio Plus

From your Portfolio Plus card check your share price movements on this page. Add them up to give you your overall total and check this against the daily dividend figure. If it matches you have not lost a penny. Follow the claim procedure on the back of your card. Always have your card available when claiming. Game rules appear on the back of your card.

No	Company	Group	Share Price
1	Peacock	Newsprint/Pub	1.00
2	Bamford	Business Serv	1.00
3	Anglia TV	Leisure	1.00
4	Grand Mas	Breweries	1.00
5	Br Ltd	Property	1.00
6	Levi's	Leisure	1.00
7	Levi's	Leisure	1.00
8	Levi's	Leisure	1.00
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38	Levi's	Leisure	1.00
39	Levi's	Leisure	1.00
40	Levi's	Leisure	1.00

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Please take into account any minor signs

£1,000 MATCH THE SHARES

If you have ticked off your eighth share to match The Shares game today, claim your prize by telephoning 0254 53772 between 10.00am and 5.00pm (see the Sunday Times for full details)

Metals

The winner of the Portfolio Plus prize of £2,000 was Mr A Hunter of Brundall, Norwich.

1992/93 High Low Company Price

1992/93	High	Low	Company	Price
100	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

BANKS, DISCOUNT, HP

1992/93	High	Low	Company	Price
100	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

BREWERIES

1992/93	High	Low	Company	Price
100	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

BUILDING, ROADS

1992/93	High	Low	Company	Price
100	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

ELECTRICALS

1992/93	High	Low	Company	Price
100	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

INDUSTRIALS

1992/93	High	Low	Company	Price
100	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

HOTELS, CATERERS

1992/93	High	Low	Company	Price
100	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

INDUSTRIALS

1992/93	High	Low	Company	Price
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INDUSTRIALS

1992/93	High	Low	Company	Price
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INDUSTRIALS

1992/93	High	Low	Company	Price
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INDUSTRIALS

1992/93	High	Low	Company	Price
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INDUSTRIALS

1992/93	High	Low	Company	Price
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INDUSTRIALS

1992/93	High	Low	Company	Price
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INDUSTRIALS

1992/93	High	Low	Company	Price
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INDUSTRIALS

1992/93	High	Low	Company	Price
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INDUSTRIALS

1992/93	High	Low	Company	Price
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INDUSTRIALS

1992/93	High	Low	Company	Price
100	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Steady start to account

ACCOUNT DAYS: Dealings began yesterday. Dealings end March 26. Settlement day April 5. Shareward bargains are permitted on two previous business days. Prices reported are at market close. Charges are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

1992/93 High Low Company Price

1992/93	High	Low	Company	Price
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1992/93 High Low Company Price

1992/93	High	Low	Company	Price
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1992/93 High Low Company Price

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1992/93 High Low Company Price

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1992/93 High Low Company Price

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1992/93 High Low Company Price

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1992/93 High Low Company Price

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1992/93 High Low Company Price

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1992/93 High Low Company Price

1992/93	High	Low	Company	Price
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Portfolio Plus

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DIVIDEND £2,000
Claims required for +53 points
Claimants should ring 0254-53772

1992/93 High Low Company Price

1992/93	High	Low	Company	Price
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1992/93 High Low Company Price

30 UNIT TRUST PRICES

THE TIMES UNIT TRUST INFORMATION SERVICE

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FT-SE VO

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	FT 30 share:	2269.8 (+)
(.62) (.216)	Brussels:	
	Congress	6204.02 (+) 6.
(.66)	Paris: C&C	5274.00 (+)
	Zurich: SKA Gen	487.5 (-)
(.79)	London:	
	FT A-Share	1424.95 (+3.)
	FT B-Share	1564.77 (+3.)
(.13)	FT Gold Mines	98.0 (-)
(.51)	FT Food Intenat	113.61 (-)
	FT Govt Secs	97.74 (40%)
(.57)	Bond Index	138.38
	SEAQ Volume	578.
	USM (Danzon)	131.95 (-).
NATIONAL OPTIONS		
	Last Declaration Due By	For Settlement
Apr 17, Amstrad, Aram Energy, ASDA, Ave Higon et al., BSA, Breda, BSC, BSG, BSW, Burrill Jones, FMC, FNFC, Flinders, Pore & Coles Anstard, Medeva, Queens MC		

LONDON FINANCIAL

	Period	Open
FFSE 100	Mar 93	292.64
Previous open interest: 30443	Jun 93	293.88
Three Month Sterling	Mar 93	94.12
Previous open interest: 291780	Jun 93	94.70
Three Mth Eurodollar	Mar 93	96.75
Previous open interest: 24491	Jun 93	96.60
Three Mth Euro DM	Mar 93	92.55
Previous open interest: 32615	Jun 93	92.17
US Treasury Bond	Mar 93	107.07
Previous open interest: 51818	Jun 93	107.02
Long Gilt	Mar 93	106.07
Previous open interest: 79813	Jun 93	106.02
Japanese Govt Bond	Mar 93	110.09
Previous open interest: 138444	Jun 93	110.09
German Govt Bond	Mar 93	90.58
Previous open interest: 138444	Jun 93	90.58
Three month ECU	Mar 93	91.98
Previous open interest: 19582	Jun 93	91.94
Euro Swiss Franc	Mar 93	94.98
Previous open interest: 52022	Jun 93	94.98
Italian Govt Bond	Mar 93	96.94
Previous open interest: 47212	Jun 93	96.94

TUBES

	Low	Cross Volume		Exchange
00	2915.00	2922.00	10025	
01	2933.00	2939.5	5554	
02	94.06	94.08	10013	
03	94.06	94.5	15683	
04	94.72	94.72	10000	
05	96.74	96.75	88	
06	96.18	96.50	1851	
07	92.54	92.19	9174	
08	93.15	93.24	45421	
09		100.11		
10	105.31	105.30	93	
11	106.27	106.28	20878	
12	110.07	110.12	750	
13		91.25	79288	
14	93.98	96.42	0	
15	93.93	94.04	367	
16	91.92	92.94	2182	
17	96.06	94.94	950	
18	96.06	96.04	9946	
19	96.87	97.01	10225	
20		96.94	0	

Source: **Wito Renta**
Wito Renta
American
Brussels
Copenhagen
London
Frankfurt
Madrid
Milan
Norway
New York
Oslo
Paris
Stockholm
Switzerland
Vienna
Zurich
Other

MONEY MARKETS

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21	GULF REPORT: The storms we			
22	the US over the weekend also hit			
23	to the sugar market. Not only			
24	weather hit Florida, a key can			
25	end of the storm also caused d			
26	rain and white sugar soared as			
27	fears that red stockpiles will			
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COMMODITIES

played the east coast of the peninsula the same tone of high whiffs and freezing landing area, but the tail end in Cuba. Prices of wheat, but already there are mixed.		CRUDE Brent Physical Brent 15 day Avg Brent 15 day Median W Texas Intermed W Texas Intermed	
GRN LONDON GRAIN FUTURES WHEAT (cable D)		Spot CIP N Premium C 15 Genl Exp Nov EEC II H Nov EEC II M S.S. FIC II M Argentina	
Mar	141.90	Apr	174.0
May	143.20	May	172.0
Jul	144.50	Jun	172.0
Sep	110.25		
Nov	119.20		
Dec	119.25		
Volume: 148			
BARLEY SKELES D4			
Mar	140.80	Apr 91	181.0
May	139.25	May 91	181.0
Sep	106.90	Jun 91	181.0
Nov	110.25		
Dec	114.60		
Volume: 10			
FL-PRO SOYA (cable D)			
Apr	146.80	Apr 91	202.0
Jun	141.80	May 91	202.0
Oct	141.80	Jun 91	202.0
Dec	147.00		
Dec	147.00		
Volume: 25			
POTATO			
May	Open	Close	
Apr	29.1	29.1	
Apr	29.1	29.1	
Apr	29.1	29.1	
Volume: 13			
FUBBER Nov 1 RSS C 62 Apr 62 64.25-63.75		Mar 93	High
		Apr 93	High
		May 93	High
		Jun 93	High
		Jul 93	199.00
		Aug 93	199.00

Copper (Vols per day)		LONDON METALS	
Coffee D4 (W/term)	15059.5105		
Lead (W/term)	279.25-279.50		
Zinc Spot H/G (W/term)	569.00-569.00		
Aluminum H/G (W/term)	1146.5-1147.00		
Nickel (W/term)	905.50-910.00		

Brazil cruzeiro
Cyprus pound
Finland mark

Oil		
15 Jul	173.38	SLR
2 Aug	175.75	SLR
5 Sep	176.75	SLR
12 Aug	176.75	SLR
19 Aug	176.75	SLR
26 Aug	176.75	SLR
3 Sep	176.75	SLR
10 Sep	176.75	SLR
17 Sep	176.75	SLR
24 Sep	176.75	SLR
1 Oct	176.75	SLR
7 Oct	176.75	SLR
14 Oct	176.75	SLR
21 Oct	176.75	SLR
28 Oct	176.75	SLR
4 Nov	176.75	SLR
11 Nov	176.75	SLR
18 Nov	176.75	SLR
25 Nov	176.75	SLR
2 Dec	176.75	SLR
9 Dec	176.75	SLR
16 Dec	176.75	SLR
23 Dec	176.75	SLR
30 Dec	176.75	SLR
6 Jan	176.75	SLR
13 Jan	176.75	SLR
20 Jan	176.75	SLR
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28 Jul	176.75	SLR
4 Aug	176.75	SLR
11 Aug	176.75	SLR
18 Aug	176.75	SLR
25 Aug	176.75	SLR
1 Sep	176.75	SLR
8 Sep	176.75	SLR
15 Sep	176.75	SLR
22 Sep	176.75	SLR
29 Sep	176.75	SLR
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14 Sep	176.75	SLR
21 Sep	176.75	SLR

Canada	1.2462-1.2467
Denmark	6.40-6.41
France	5.655-5.660

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Costs: Frances Gibb says some solicitors blush to admit their fees, and Patrick Stevens gives a breakdown

The charge of the heavy brigade

When members of the public think of lawyers, they reach for their wallets. The cost of going to law and the delays involved are the two outstanding blots on the legal system. Large City of London firms rank as the world's most expensive, according to a recent survey by the International Financial Law Review, with partners charging an average of £345 an hour. Recently Pamela Wheatley, a solicitor in Southborough, Kent, wrote in the *Law Society Gazette* of her "shame at being a solicitor" because the current going rate for the High Street solicitor is £110 to £120 an hour. "Surely it is obvious to everyone," she said, "that we have priced ourselves out of the market; that few people can afford these rates and no one should have to pay them."

It is obvious we have priced ourselves out of the market

In fact, the recession, together with stricter standards on the need for solicitors to explain charges to clients, is slowly forcing change both in levels of fees and in the matter of keeping the public informed. Conveyancing costs, for instance, have plummeted; they used to be twice as high as they are now in real terms. Some firms offer such low rates — a flat fee of £250 — that there is concern about the quality of service and frequent comments that the work simply cannot be done for that price. It is not just tougher competition, that is forcing fees down. Two years ago this May, the *Law Society* brought in a rule requiring solicitors

firms to set up their own complaints machinery, and advising — but not obliging — them to inform clients of their charges at the start of a transaction and update them regularly. Although advising about costs is not compulsory, failure to inform clients can lead to a complaint to the Solicitors Complaints Bureau.

As Mavis Fairhurst, the head of public relations at the bureau, says, "If a firm has not given information on costs, we look upon that as evidence of inadequate professional services. The penalties can be requiring the solicitor to reduce the bill, waive his right to recover further fees, or refund fees already paid." The bureau can also order compensation where appropriate.

Complaints about solicitors' fees have stood at about 10 per cent of all complaints to the bureau in the past three years. In 1992, the diagnostic unit at the bureau took 12,500 calls on its Helpline, and again about 10 per cent related to fees.

In many cases, the complaint is not that the charge is too high in itself, but that the service was inadequate and therefore the fee is not justified, she says.

Where clients are not happy with a bill, they can ask for it to be assessed by the Law Society (known as seeking a remuneration certificate). This applies only to non-contentious work. In cases involving litigation, clients can ask for the bill to be "taxed", or assessed by the court.

In 1992, there was a drop of 9.4 per cent in the number of applica-

THE COST OF GOING TO LAW

Region	Company/commercial			Commercial litigation			Private client		
	Low	High	Avg	Low	High	Avg	Low	High	Avg
London	130	340	235	100	330	185	75	275	165
SE	60	185	113	60	180	107	60	160	105
Midlands	45	225	105	60	200	95	60	175	100
SW	70	200	105	70	150	95	65	140	90
E Anglia	65	150	97	60	120	90	55	140	92
NW	70	250	110	60	200	105	60	150	90
NE	60	250	110	65	220	105	55	160	90
Wales	65	175	105	60	180	88	60	150	90

Changing rates are based on a mixture of factors including seniority of the lawyer handling the problem, complexity of the case and specialist expertise required, and location and overheads. Basic rates may also go up if, for example, the work involves anti-social hours

tions for remuneration certificates: 2,842 applications, as against 3,140 in 1991. About one third of applications lead to a solicitor's fee being reduced. The principal reasons are: not sticking to the original estimate or quotation and not revising the fee in line with Law Society guidance; excessive time spent; defects in quality of service; and — in probate matters particularly — fixing the fee too rigidly as a percentage of the estate, when the work done does not justify this. "We do feel the costs rule has had some effect, and we will be monitoring to see how much," Ms Fairhurst says. "Another factor could be that there is less work about and therefore fewer clients are challenging bills."

But there is some way to go. Michael Barnes, the Legal Services Ombudsman, who deals with people unhappy with the way the bureau has handled complaints, cites the case of

a client who was charged at an hourly rate, then found that when the letter came, the solicitor had made 50 per cent markup for "care and attention". "In another case, the complainant had run up costs that were more than double the amount of money that was in dispute," he says. Solicitors should try to quote all-in rates and inform clients regularly, he says. Although they are exhorted to disclose charges, he believes a mandatory rule would have more bite. In the meantime, where a client says he was not informed, and the solicitor has no evidence to show that he was, "I am likely to believe the client," Mr Barnes says.

In the *Law Society Gazette*, Rich-

ard Thomas of Pangbourne in Berkshire, wrote in reply to Ms Wheatley that solicitors who overcharge deserve to lose their clients, while those who undercharge "may be costing us all dearly". The vast majority of solicitors, he said, "find that the going rate of £110 to £120 per hour is, in fact, needed for the reasonable but not excessive living to which most of us aspire. That is why it is the going rate."

In the end, the public will decide. Ms Wheatley says that only when solicitors put service to clients first and reduce their "inflated expectations" will they see an upturn in work. Either way, charges must increasingly be justified if the public is to feel content.

The going rate is what is needed to earn a fair living

A beginner's guide to where the money goes

Solicitors price their services in essentially the same way as supermarkets price their baked beans, but they make the whole process so complicated that only they understand it. The basis of solicitors' charges is simple. They work out how much their work costs and then apply a markup. So why do clients find the whole question of lawyers' charges so daunting?

Here is a plain guide to solicitors' charges. First, they are called costs, not charges. Ignore that; they mean exactly the same. The most basic charge is to a private client. This is called "solicitor and own client", and the basis of it is how much it costs to do the work.

A routine conveyancing sale and purchase takes on average ten hours. Solicitors work out how much it costs to provide an hour's work. At its simplest, this can be done by dividing the overheads of the firm by the number of hours worked by the solicitors each year. Allowance is

Legal fees are the result of careful calculations based on overheads and the costs solicitors incur working at each individual practice

made for return on the capital employed in the practice and notional salaries for partners, etc.

This hourly expense rate will vary enormously according to the overheads of the firm. It can be as low as £55 an hour for a small provincial firm, but may be more than £200 in a City firm. Whatever the rate, the principle is the same: this is the amount that must be charged for every hour you work if you do not want to lose money.

In the conveyancing transaction, this translates to a basic charge of £550 for the ten hours' work by the firm with low overheads, and £2,000 for the City firm. Now this is just the basic charge to cover overheads. If the solicitor wants to earn more than he would by investing his capital elsewhere and getting a job on a

made for return on the capital employed in the practice and notional salaries for partners, etc. This hourly expense rate will vary enormously according to the overheads of the firm. It can be as low as £55 an hour for a small provincial firm, but may be more than £200 in a City firm. Whatever the rate, the principle is the same: this is the amount that must be charged for every hour you work if you do not want to lose money.

If a solicitor gives a quotation for work to be done, the figure should be fixed or else the hourly rate should be quoted, including or indicating the markup. The professional rules now require solicitors to explain the basis of their charges at the beginning of a transaction.

Many bulk purchasers of legal services, such as insurance companies, require hourly rates to be

quoted inclusive of the proposed markup.

If the legal work involves not a conveyancing transaction but litigation, then the solicitor will still work on the basis of the hourly charge plus a markup. The litigation may result in the other party being ordered to pay the clients' costs. This process is controlled by the courts, and is called taxation. The amount that the loser is ordered to pay is limited to what the court considers reasonable. The court will have a scale of hourly rates for its area, and if the winner is employing solicitors who charge more, the winner will end up paying the difference between the total bill and the amount that he gets from his opponent. The hourly rate for most county courts is £55 to £75, and the standard markup is 50 per cent.

The markup can be varied in both court and non-court work. The factors to be taken into account are laid down by statutory instrument and by the courts. They include the difficulty of the work, its value and importance, and the circumstances in which it was done.

The lowest charges tend to be levied by the smallest firms, and the highest by the larger ones. Unlike in manufacturing, there are few economies of scale in legal work. If the volume of work doubles, the overheads also double, and the partners' expectation of profit increases too as they have to put in more capital. Although there may be scope for delegating some work to junior staff, they have to be trained and supervised, and this inexorably adds to the overheads and charges.

PATRICK STEVENS

The author is a practising solicitor. ● Next week: City firms' charges and a look into the future

Supreme justice — warts and all

It was Alexis de Tocqueville who in 1835 remarked that "scarcely any political question arises in the United States which is not resolved, sooner or later, into a judicial question". As English law continues to move in the same direction, *The Oxford Companion to the Law* is a valuable guide to the history and practice of that powerful institution.

An impressive group of expert contributors has summarised hundreds of significant judgments, some wise, many foolish. In its time, the court has precipitated a civil war on the question of slavery, but helped to secure a measure of racial justice when politicians were apathetic or downright hostile. It has advanced civil liberties for defendants in criminal cases but upheld the internment during the second world war of citizens of Japanese extraction, and asserted the constitutionality of statutes which criminalise homosexual conduct in private between consenting adults.

What Alexander Hamilton, one of the founders of the American Constitution, described in *The Federalist Papers* as the "least dangerous" branch of government has, on occasions, been heroically firm, but on others distinctly wobbly. Few social issues have escaped the court's attention, though the Justices have rarely acknowledged the limits of legal analysis as overtly as did Justice Stewart in 1964 when he conceded that the best he could do as a definition of pornography was "I know it when I see it".

Even so wise a judge as Justice Holmes could err, upholding in 1927 a state law for the compulsory sterilisation of the mentally impaired with the words "three generations of imbeciles are enough".

The volume does not confine its focus to the giants of Supreme Court jurisprudence. The Justices are described, warts and all, from James Wilson (jailed for debt in the 1790s) to Clarence Thomas (accused of sexual harassment prior to his appointment in 1991).

The *Companion* paints the unattractive human face of many of those who have sat in judgement. The work of the 19th-century court was made more difficult by "McKenna's temper tantrums, Henry Baldwin's violent rages and senile Stephen J. Field's exaggerated irritability."

Associate Justice (1914-1941) was an anti-Semite who refused to talk to his distinguished colleagues Brandeis and Cardozo. In 1946, Hugo Black and Robert Jackson each threatened to resign from the Court if President Truman appointed the other as Chief Justice. So venomous was the uncooled contempt which is a valuable guide to the history and practice of that powerful institution.

There are informative notes on legal topics covered by the court's judgments from abortion to zoning, and on a wide range of incidental subjects. If you want to know about the Supreme Court, the building, or popular images of the court in works of fiction such as Margaret Truman's novel *Murder in the Supreme Court*, or the film *First Monday in October*, the *Companion* will tell you.

Every year, in 1,032 pages, the Supreme Court cannot be comprehensively described. I can find no reference to Judith P. Benjamin, the first Jew to be offered a Supreme Court seat by a president (he turned it down, in 1852, preferring to remain in the Senate). There is only an incidental mention of Bob Woodward and Scott Armstrong's 1970 book *The Brethren*, which revealed, to the uncooled anger of some of the Justices, what went on behind the scenes.

Some day soon the European Convention on Human Rights will be incorporated into United Kingdom law, and English lawyers and judges will need properly to understand the principles by which fundamental rights are protected.

So extensive is the breadth of experience of the United States Supreme Court in interpreting and applying an enforceable Bill of Rights, so profound is its wisdom, and so illuminating its errors, on all topics of constitutional concern, that no serious lawyer can afford to remain ignorant of its jurisprudence.

For anyone interested in the content and development of the American law, and the personalities who have produced it, the *Oxford Companion* is an indispensable volume.

The author is a practising barrister and a Fellow of All Souls College. ● The *Oxford Companion to the Law*, edited by Kermit L. Hall, is published by Oxford University Press, £30.



COUNSEL
DAVID PANNICK QC

The lost children

A GROUP of MPs is demanding the abolition of family passports to stem the growing number of tug-of-war child abductions. A total of 1,200 children a year is abducted from the United Kingdom alone.

MPs suggest that children should be issued with their own passports, with details of any court orders, such as with whom they should live. The call last week was part of an action plan aimed at stopping the crime of child abduction or child kidnapping, in which one parent, without the permission of the other, removes his or her child to another country.

The report, drawn up by MPs with the support of Reunite, the National Council for Child Abduction, says that the number of children now being abducted amounts to the equivalent of 40 nursery schools of children.

Most are under the age of eight and some never see their parents again. "The harm which a child suffers as a result of an abduction cannot be underestimated," it says, "however high-minded the motive of the abductor."

Huge waste MILLIONS of pounds of taxpayers' money have been wasted because Parliament is

leaving on the shelf proposals for law reform which have been made by its own law reform body, the Law Commission.

The stinging criticism comes from the former secretary of the commission in its annual report, which says that the country's legal system is labouring under "outdated laws" and "quaint Victorian wording".

Mr Justice Brooke, the new chairman of the Law Commission, welcomes efforts now being made by the Lord Chancellor and Parliament to tackle the problem, but he says: "Millions of pounds would have been saved in legal fees and court costs if Law Commission recommendations could have been passed smoothly into law soon after they were published."

Hundreds of criminal appeals are also heard by the Court of Appeal every year, at an estimated cost of £13,000 each, the commission adds. Among them are cases involving the failure of the trial judge to provide a warning about uncorroborated evidence in his summing-up, although the commission had urged that the "troublesome" corroboration rules in certain cases (not confessions) should be scrapped. Meanwhile, more than

£3 million of taxpayers' money is being spent each year on the commission in pursuit of law reform, the commission says. Yet there are more than 20 reports which have still to be implemented, some more than six years old.

Night lawyer PIONEER in education it may be, but Birkbeck College, London, is not breaking new ground with its part-time evening law degree course.

Paul Dobson, who holds a law chair at Thames Valley University, has written to point out that "we run a flourishing part-time evening LLB here at Ealing and have done so ever since 1974".

"It's about time we had a solicitor High Court judge," he said.

Unless he does so, Lord Mackay's legislation to open up the higher ranks of the judiciary to solicitors begins to look as empty as some of the other legal reforms which have so far failed to bite.

All out A TIP for all the lawyers who feel strongly about legal aid cuts: follow the Greek lawyers' example and go on strike.

For the past nine months, the Greek courts have been paralysed after the lawyers

went on strike in protest over a new law that threatens to increase the tax they have to pay. The lawyers appear to have been on to a good wheeze, where their taxable income was calculated by taking the minimum court fee they earned for the year, regardless of their actual earnings.

The new law would assume that their actual earnings were 40 per cent more than the basic figure. Why they do not just make tax returns like anyone else is a mystery.

Hear, hear NOISY tenants cause enormous heartache to neighbours and landlords alike, but as any lawyer will confirm, exciting them is far from easy. The main problem is usually a lack of direct evidence of the noise. Witnesses, generally neighbours, are frequently intimidated by the perpetrators and are afraid to come forward.

Sunderland council has come up with a scheme to tackle noise nuisance, which afflicts many of its council tenants, and has started to employ "professional witnesses" to collect evidence of noise.

Several cases backed up by these independent witnesses are pending. If the outcome is successful, other public and housing association sector landlords may benefit from adopting similar schemes.

SCRIVENER

More law, pages 33, 35

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Well-known practice requires City trained Solicitor with top class academic and 3-4PQE. Experience of Yellow and Blue Books, MBO's and venture capital essential.

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INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY to £40,000

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Leading international house requires Lawyers with 1-4PQE. Workload includes Eurobonds, syndicated loans and corporate work.

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Figuring out compensation

How should damages for an accident victim be awarded? Should they be given in the traditional lump sum, or in a series of payments made throughout the victim's life?

These questions are under scrutiny by the Law Commission, the government's law reform body, responses to the first of the commission's consultation papers dealing with damages for personal injuries must be submitted by April.

A problem in any system for the evaluation of non-reversible damages is the need to make accurate forecasts about a claimant's future. In many cases in which the claimant is very seriously injured and incapacitated, one of the most important yet troubling forecasts concerns his or her life expectancy.

Since the law requires that a claimant be compensated only to the extent that is reasonably necessary, and for the period that he or she suffers the disability, a victim whose life expectancy has been reduced will receive less compensation than will a victim whose life expectancy is undiminished.

For the grievously injured claimant, the cost of his or her future care is often one of the most significant elements in the overall claim. This may cover the need to provide paid

David Foskett, QC, reports on moves to reform personal injury awards

careers to assist in the family home, or to pay for a suitable institutional regime, or a combination of the two.

The annual cost of providing this level of care is enormous, so this part of a claim is of great concern to both the claimant and the insurance company or the health authority ultimately responsible for meeting the award. In a

Medical experts, lawyers and judges often have to pluck figures from the air

case where the issue of a reduced life expectancy arises, those advising the parties — or, indeed, the judge deciding the case if it is not settled — have the serious difficulty of assessing the quality of the medical evidence available.

Many lawyers acting in this field can recount stories of cases in which widely differing forecasts were made about the

life expectancy of a claimant.

In a serious brain damage case just over ten years ago, Mr Justice Michael Davies pleaded for the provision of funds for appropriate research so that better forecasts could be made.

Things have not moved much further forward since. Medical experts, lawyers and judges have to do a great deal of plucking of figures from the air and splitting the difference between medical views.

This kind of rough justice can lead to real hardship, particularly if the claimant outlives the life expectancy which is chosen as the basis for assessing future losses and costs. That cannot be right, humane or just.

In a case decided in July 1987, Mr Justice (now Lord Justice) Hirst drew attention to the need for reform of the law in this area. He suggested that there might be scope for continuous assessment of need in cases of this nature.

Since 1987, many of the more substantial awards of damages have been made the subject of a structured settlement.

By this method, part of the award made is used to purchase annuities in a way that provides the claimant with a tax-free income for life. To this extent, the money never runs out, even if the claimant lives



Heidi Everett, who was awarded £8.9 million as compensation for road-accident injuries

a lot longer than expected. However, this does not provide the full answer to the problem because the amount available to be placed into the "structured settlement" is, as the Law Commission records in its current paper, still largely determined by how much the award of damages is or would be on the conventional lump sum approach.

The conventional approach involves assessing the claimant's life expectancy in the uncertain and unsatisfactory way described earlier in this article.

Finally in litigation is a worthwhile objective. The once-for-all assessment of damages achieves it. However, the occasional exception to the principle is warranted when justice

demands it. The jurisdiction to review an award of damages, whether structured or otherwise, when a claimant outlives the reduced lifespan upon which the award is based must represent a small price to pay for achieving justice and proper compensation in an individual case. It is to be hoped that the Law Commission will recommend a mechanism to achieve this.

ALEXANDER DAVIDSON

Fast movers in a new market

New markets for lawyers are rare these days but one that is about to explode with potential is education. The incorporation of about 300 further education and sixth form colleges, each of which will need a legal adviser, has created a demand for legal advice where none existed. The umbrella provided by local authorities' legal departments has been mostly removed and the colleges' new governing bodies must fend for themselves.

But the message to any solicitors about to make a sales pitch to the local college principal has to be: "Don't waste your time". This virgin territory has already been staked out with lightning speed by a small number of firms.

A typical success story is told by Blake Lapthorn, a south-coast firm with a strong regional following. It already acts for Portsmouth University and so was a natural choice for a number of further education colleges in the southern counties as they searched for legal advisers.

But although Blake Lapthorn and several other firms have had some success, this new market has been an important test bed for the client appeal of that new hybrid — the national firm with a regional, rather than a metropolitan, identity.

Over the past few months, as firms have battled their way through countless "beauty parades", the outfit that appears to have succeeded spectacularly is Eversheds. Merged last year from a mix of strong local firms from Newcastle to Cardiff, Eversheds offers the perfect solution for further education colleges, which want to be sure about what they are buying.

Combining strong local affiliations with the resources and credibility of a national firm, Eversheds could provide gov-

erning bodies — increasingly made up of business people and accountants — with the comfort factor they need during a tense transition period.

The result is that in the final run-up period to incorporation, Eversheds has managed to pick up an impressive 20 per cent of available clients. As Victor Semmens, its chairman, comments, "This is something we saw as an important emerging market, which we would be ideally placed to enter. Our success is a tribute to the quality of our preparation."

The firm's progress has been in the teeth of strong opposition. For example, Nabarro Nathanson, the West End firm, has a strong education team and an established following in higher education; several universities and some Oxford and Cambridge colleges are already on its books. Howard Rogg, a consultant to Nabarro's education group, says: "Competition is ferocious and the colleges are very concerned about costs."

One London firm that has fared well is Wedlake Saint, which has been

appointed legal adviser to about 30 colleges. It has also had the foresight to spot the potential and build expertise in the issues facing the education sector.

John Hall, the head of Wedlake Saint's education law department, saw the potential in the late 1980s when polytechnics went through a similar process. Wedlake Saint won much credibility from the new-style educational managers, and Mr Hall was appointed company secretary by the Industrial Relations Association, the colleges' employer forum, which attracted individual colleges as clients. Half of the firm's 40 lawyers now work on educational matters.

EDWARD FENNELL



Foresight: John Hall

Two thousand Lloyd's names go to court

One of the biggest actions in English legal history is under way

Writs have been issued by Lloyd's names against their agents in what is one of the largest actions in English legal history in terms of numbers of individual plaintiffs and defendants.

The 2,145 names, whose assets support underwriting at Lloyd's, are members of the Gooda Walker syndicates. The Gooda Walker Action Group, on behalf of the

names, is suing 67 members' agents who placed them with syndicates that lost £396 million. It has raised £4 million to bring the case.

The action alleges grossly negligent underwriting by Gooda Walker syndicates 164, 290, 298 and 299. Philip Rocher, partner of Wilde Sapte, solicitor for the Gooda

Walker Action Group, says there is every chance the action will go to judgment because an out-of-court settlement seems increasingly unlikely.

The members' agents defending the action took compulsory errors and omissions (E&O) insurance, mostly with Lloyd's syndicates. A

court ruling against the members' agents would mean the E&O insurers stand to pay out a substantial proportion of the plaintiffs' claims.

Mr Rocher says the members' agents are not entirely covered by E&O insurance and the potential consequences of the action are dire. "Some of the claims are big

enough to bankrupt the agencies," he adds.

Michael Deeny, accountant and rock music promoter who chairs the Gooda Walker Action Group, suggests that a judgment would encourage other action groups alleging negligence to litigate.

He says the E&O insurers may well say that this is more

than they could be legally obliged to pay.

The action group has recently harboured internal disputes about whether committee members should be entitled to part of the damages if the action succeeds. This will now be decided by an independent committee.

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Franchising warning as optimism picks up

A WARNING to would-be franchisees contemplating their first move into franchising has gone out, as the latest annual survey of the industry has shown it still holding up comparatively well during the recession.

Franchising turnover is put at £4.5 billion last year, a 5.7 per cent decline on the year before, according to the 1992 franchise survey carried out for the British Franchise Association and sponsored by National Westminster Bank.

The failure rate of franchised units was 7.4 per cent, up from the previous year's 7.2 per cent. Peter Stern, head of NatWest's franchise section, said: "The outlook for franchising is increasingly optimistic. More franchisees (78 per cent compared with 70 per cent in 1991) say that they are trading at a profit."

Nearly a fifth of franchise companies now have operations outside Britain, mainly in mainland Europe. More than half plan European operations within five years.

The warning to newcomers to franchising was aimed at those planning to visit the National Franchise Exhibition at Olympia, London, on March 26-28. It came from Mr Stern, who urged them to make full inquiries about franchisors and not to be browbeaten into taking on a franchise.

Potential franchisees should demand copies of a franchisor's accounts for the previous financial year, said Mr Stern. These should be available within six months of

the year end. Where the franchise is new, accounts should be available for the pilot operation that any sensible franchisor will have run. The franchisor should also be able to provide a bank reference.

Mr Stern stresses the importance of fully checking financial information. He suggests checking all marketing, research and sales forecasts independently and considering whether sales forecasts are realistic in the current economic situation.

He reminds franchisees to obtain advice from a solicitor, an accountant and a banker before making a commitment and adds: "Do not allow yourself to be rushed. Avoid the hard sell. Shop around. Keep an open mind as long as possible."



"I can assure you we're full of concern and understanding for the plight of small businesses."

Hi-tech for the disadvantaged

By WIDGET FINN

THERE is a link between Spitting Image puppets, fruit picking robots and wheelchairs for quadriplegic people. It is the Flexator, a pneumatic actuator invented by Jim Hennequin and developed through Airmuscle, his company. Mr Hennequin self-deprecatingly describes himself as "everybody's idea of the mad inventor, down to the white beard and sandals."

However, he combines an inventive mind with sound commercial sense. An engineer by training, he had a career in sales and marketing and ran a company for the Dowry Group before, in his forties, becoming a full-time inventor.

Mr Hennequin told his fellow board directors at Dowry about his actuator idea but they thought it would never work. Nevertheless he and his wife, Yvonne, finance director, remained convinced that it had commercial applications as well as offering help for disabled people.

Mr Hennequin believes that all industry should share its technology with the disadvantaged. Thus, when Airmuscle was formed in 1986, so was Inventaid, a sister company, to concentrate on developing aids for the disabled. As Airmuscle brings in profits by exploiting Hennequin inventions, a proportion is used to support Inventaid, a registered charity that has also attracted support from Comic Relief and Aspire, the charity for those with spinal injuries. Pearl Assurance recently gave a research grant. The Hennequins

setup in business with £600 of their own money and growth has been funded out of profits. The actuator was developed with Spitting Image for use as an animation system for their puppets when used in an exhibition context. The same principle is used for the motion platforms of flight training simulators, fruit-picking robots and wheelchair robotics.

Mr Hennequin said: "Through Inventaid we have focused on the problems of quadriplegic people who can often only move their tongue, eyes and head. We developed a wheelchair-mounted robotic system controlled by a radio-link device fitted to the upper teeth and controlled by the tongue."

The wheelchair robot, now being made by disabled people at Papworth Industries, cost £40,000 to develop and sells for under £5,000. Its only competitor, made in Holland with cash backing from the French government, costs more than six times as much.

The tongue controller, which it is hoped will cost less than £1,000 to retail, was the inspiration of Dr Robin Platts. He is a trustee of Inventaid and a consultant in orthotics.

Teletact is another creation. It is a special glove enabling a person to feel "objects" created by computer that do not physically exist. It has broad commercial applications, such as with mine and bomb handling, but can also provide tactile feedback for paralysed people.



Tactile feedback: Jim Hennequin wears his Teletact glove

North Devon, which has been fighting declines in tourism and farming, is getting a boost for small businesses. A series of evening workshops is being mounted by Devon and Cornwall Training and Enterprise Council (Tec). About 300 small businesses have signalled interest. Financial awareness, management techniques, customer care and marketing are on the agenda. Tonight there are two sessions in Ilfracombe, with a similar format tomorrow night at South Molton. Next Monday, March 22, an evening session at Bude (businesses) will be followed by Torrington on the Tuesday and Bideford the following night. Another initiative is aimed at boosting tourism. Details: Devon and Cornwall Tec telephone 0752 767929; fax 0752 770925.

Professor Sir Roland Smith, the former British Aerospace chairman and now chairman of Hepworth and Readicut International as well as a Bank of England director, will be among speakers at a one-day conference at Markyate, in Hertfordshire on April 21, exploring how businesses can switch from a survival strategy to one aimed at growth. The state of the venture capital market, factoring and business "angels" — all possible sources of financing — will be explored. The conference is being organised by GMS Executive Leasing, 48 High Street North, Dunstable, Bedfordshire LU6 1LA; telephone 0582 666970.

EDITOR DEREK HARRIS

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Mstislav Rostropovich
conducts a memorable
concert performance of
Britten's Peter Grimes

ARTS

THEATRE page 39
Sara Kestelman plays a
flighty cleaner in David
Mamet's unsatisfactory
early work, *Squirrels*



V.S. Naipaul, winner of the first David Cohen British Literature Prize, explains its significance for him

A language of the world and for the world

LAST night the first David Cohen British Literature Prize was awarded to the Trinidadian novelist V.S. Naipaul. The prize, worth £30,000 and given in association with Corgis & Co. is the biggest literary award in Britain, and recognises a "lifetime's achievement by a living British writer". Another £10,000 has been made available by the Arts Council to enable the winner to commission new writing.

Sir Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul, 60,

came to Britain to study at Oxford University in 1950. He has lived here ever since, producing criticism, journalism and travel writing, as well as a string of superb novels on the theme of post-colonial life. The best-known is probably *A House for Mr Biswas*, written in 1961. Naipaul's acceptance speech, which we publish below, dwelt on the way in which different cultures have mingled, often in surprising ways, and ultimately revitalised English literature.

I know very well that there has been an element of luck in my receiving the British Literature Prize. The prize that has been given to me could have been given to many others — I thought myself of two names when I was told about the prize and its large purpose. I thought of Anthony Powell and Harold Pinter, one man finding a way of dealing with accumulations of experience through the changes of the century; the other, apparently, narrower, but also more lyrical, finding the exposed nerve ends we all continue to have. Opposed talents, it might appear, but also aspects of the sensibility of our time.

At a certain stage there is no real competition between writers, since every serious writer has his own conscious makes his own explorations, and (with luck) finds his own audience. To twist the famous quotation, "every writer is an island, and part of the main: entirely of himself and part of the general flow."

But my luck pleases me. I like the name of the prize, first of all, because this writing career of mine has been conducted in Britain. Writing is more than a matter of spirit. A book is a physical, commercial object. It requires a well-organised society. If you are going to make a living as a writer you need publishers, reviewers, bookshops, libraries, a public looking for new work: a book trade.

When I was starting, in the mid-1950s, there was no other place where I could have set up as an English-language writer, and found encouragement. It is, of course, different now. So as a writer I was separated, and sometimes deeply separated, from my background — if you take Trinidad as my direct background and India as my ancestral background.

This separation helped with the early books. They dealt with the past: a complete,

limited experience. The way ahead was less clear. Adult experience seemed formless. It is so for others as well, but for me there was also an internal pressure to stay with the past, the smaller world. And even when I saw that my English experience had become as much my material as the other, and that there was also India, to look at and write about, and Africa, and other places, I was not sure how I could add these new layers while always making a whole of my experience.

The English language came with a literature, with certain forms. The forms helped when I was writing about the smaller, complete world, but they didn't help at all when I was trying to get at the true nature of my wider experience.

Every writer is at once entirely of himself and part of the general flow

I have always felt the need, for example, to establish the identity of the writer, the narrator, the gatherer of impressions: to make the point that, whatever associations came with the language, this English-language traveller in the world was not English but colonial, and carried different pictures in his head.

If I were starting today I would have no sense of anomaly, because there are now so many colonial English-language writers. But I am talking of 30 years ago. This is a very rough, elided account of what was a constant creative anxiety for many years. I give

it here to say how glad I am that the prize seeks to acknowledge all of a writer's work rather than a single book, and that it does not lift one literary form above another. In my mind I have made a long journey; bits of the record are scattered through the books I have written; no one book or one kind of book is true to the effort.

In the modern period the rendering of reality has always been an issue. Judgments and forms have constantly varied. Hazlitt (who died in 1830) thought that Byron's personality display obscured the world. Scott, the truer writer, he said, because Scott did not stand between the reader and the world.

To render the truth of his own life Hazlitt had only the essay. It wasn't enough. The novelists who came after used the novel form to get at truths the essay could not per- at truths about society and mental states, for instance.

The great novels of the 19th century still have this quality of truth; and part of their excitement is that the writers can be felt to be writing about certain things for the first time. They were not versions of what had gone before, and novels like them cannot be done again.

Form and content go together. You cannot simply pour new experience or new material into an old form; that is not only to write somebody else's book all over again, it is also to falsify the material.

The traditional novel never really existed; good work was always new. Reality always has to be captured. Methods will change as the world changes. Everyone will find his own way. So there is no tradition of form that comes with the language. The tradition that does come, from the 19th century, is a moral one. It is the striving after truth, the hard look at the world, and its effect is subversive. That may be too strong a word, but



"There was no other place where I could have set up as an English-language writer, and found encouragement": V.S. Naipaul on his adopted homeland

many of the great original writers of the 19th century and this has helped to undermine and remake their civilisation. The ideal of truth as revolution is well described by Leonard Woolf in his account of his time at Cambridge in the 1890s.

The idea, inevitably, spread out of Britain. It did so in at least one extraordinary way. Gandhi was not a great reader — though I once read somewhere that in 1942, at the time of the "Quit India" campaign, somebody saw him one day reading *How Green Was My Valley*. Anyway, this is a story from 1904. Gandhi is 35. He is in South Africa, and has been there for ten years, working among the Indian community on what I suppose can be called civil rights.

At this stage, stubbornness is his principal virtue. He has no political dogma; he has read too little for that. Every situation is new and at every step he has to think very hard about what he should do. He has developed an idea of being good, but he doesn't know as yet how he might express this in his way of life.

He is going this evening from Johannesburg to Durban, and Polak, a lawyer and a friend (they first met in a Johannesburg vegetarian restaurant), comes to the railway station and gives him a book for the journey. It is Ruskin's *Unto this Last*. Gandhi, after he gets into the book, simply cannot put it down. The journey to Durban lasts 24 hours. At the end, Gandhi is a transformed man. The latent goodness in his heart has been brought out by Ruskin: only a poet, he says, could have done that.

He says he learnt three things from the book. First, the good of the individual is contained in the good of all. He says he knew that already, but really it was something he had learnt only from the general anti-Indian South African prejudice. The second is that the barber's work is as valuable as the lawyer's he had begun, he says, in a vague way to know that. The third Ruskinian truth was something he had never known at all. It was that

the life of labour, physical labour involving the use of the hands, whether by craftsman or tiller, was the life worth living.

He knows now what to do. He founds a commune, he translates Ruskin into Gujarati, he elaborates his idea of a movement called the Welfare of All. When he finally leaves South Africa and goes to India in 1915, these inward ideas — of perfectibility, bread labour, which contains the idea of internal caste reform — go with him. They balance and give a universality to the political fight. He finds an emblem of labour: the village spinning wheel. It is really the mahatma's tribute to the Victorian sage.

Let us stay just a while longer with Ruskin's followers in England: the Arts and Crafts movement, Ashbee, William Morris and the Kelmscott Press. The press, when it fell on hard times, passed to an Anglo-Ceylonese, Ananda Coomaraswamy, who had inherited a fortune from his father.

Coomaraswamy, who was born in 1877, applied Ruskinian

ideas of the craftsman and medieval art to his study of the arts and crafts of India and Ceylon. He collected Indian paintings, mainly on paper. He established categories, he interpreted. There had been no one before him.

This kind of Indian painting was not a public art; it was hidden away in the libraries of princes. He was a prodigious man: his work still has to be taken into account.

In 1917, Coomaraswamy offered his great collection to the new university of Benares, in India. In return he wanted to be made professor of Indian art. They roughed him up and sent him away, so he took his collection to the museum in Boston, Massachusetts.

Coomaraswamy to Boston. I welcome the luck of the prize.

Gandhi at almost the same time back to India — two men following different paths, it might seem. But 75 years on we can see them both as aspects of Indian renewal; and in the most unlikely way both careers contain a tribute to Ruskin. The irony is that Ruskin, after the Indian Mutiny, had no time for Indians.

This was just one chain of ideas and influence in our tangled civilisation. There must be hundreds, thousands, more. They will multiply as the English language spreads, and the various literatures of English grow. The connections will become more subtle sometimes they will be hidden. It is with a consciousness of some of these connections that I welcome the luck of the prize.

TELEVISION REVIEW: Horizon

The empire strikes out

Ten years ago, President Reagan launched the Strategic Defence Initiative, or Star Wars, as it was immediately nicknamed. Among the enjoyable excesses of the 1980s, SDI holds a place of honour. Not only did it stimulate a debate about nuclear deterrence, with many of the severest critics of mutual assured destruction suddenly finding that they were rather attached to it after all, but it put the shivers up the Kremlin, infuriated the CND, and provided a pork-barrel full of the choicest cuts for the scientific community.

Whether these incidental advantages were worth \$30 billion is perhaps questionable. From the beginning it was clear to most, though not all, that SDI had little chance of working the way Reagan envisaged it. Albert Gore, then a senator from Tennessee, called it "a lunatic fantasy".

The president's idea was to create an impenetrable shield above the United States, built from such exotic components as X-ray lasers, particle beam weapons and hypervelocity guns, able to shoot down the whole Soviet nuclear arsenal as it rose from the launchpad.

SDI was a wonderland of high technology, juicy research contracts and novel strategic concepts. It was also the excuse, as last night's *Horizon* (BBC 2) eloquently demonstrated, for some of the most fluent and shameless exaggeration ever carried out in the name of liberty, equality and the pursuit of happiness.

While the engineers struggled to get even a single one of the ideas

Of all the excesses of the 1980s, Star Wars must take the billion-dollar biscuit

working, the frontmen insisted that everything was going wonderfully. What the president had decreed, the scientific community would deliver.

Diplomatically, SDI was rather a success. It wrongfooted the Soviet Union and forced it into expensive competition. In 1985, at Reykjavik,

In the end, all that was left was what had been there at the start

only Reagan's attachment to Star Wars stood between the West and the acceptance of a long-standing Soviet goal, the non-nuclear world. There was nothing morally wrong about Star Wars, but technically it was a dud, an idea hothoused into existence before the time was ripe.

In last night's film, a series of scientists confessed all. Dr Jay Keyworth, the president's scientific adviser at the time, admitted that he had been stunned by the enormity of what Reagan was proposing, and realised that the limits of his influence would be to tone down the rhetoric. He tried, but without much success.

Another scientist who had taken the SDI shilling said of the concept: "I thought it was hogwash". Every time the scientists tried to moderate the promises, the Pentagon lashed them up again. SDI became a hymn test of loyalty. By the end, millions had disappeared down the yawning gap between rhetoric and reality without anybody noticing.

While the propaganda films showed a "rail gun" firing a projectile through 20 sheets of steel, the engineers behind the scenes were discovering fundamental problems which would prevent such weapons ever being effective. Few hints of the truth were allowed to escape. The X-ray laser — "a remarkable invention," Dr Edward Teller told Congress, regretting that national security forbade him to say more — was actually pretty much a flop.

In the end, all that was left was what had been there at the start: a ground-based missile defence system able, on a good day, to take out a small proportion of the enemy's missiles. That, it seems, will continue to be the case.

All in all, SDI was enough to give cynicism a good name. And yet I cannot help feeling sorry that it has gone. Like a lot of things that happened in the 1980s, Star Wars was huge fun for those who did not have to pay for it. It is improper, no doubt, to judge public policy by the amount of interesting copy it generates for journalists but on that score Star Wars will be sadly missed.

NIGEL HAWKES

Posthumous win for victim of Aids

THE young French film director Cyril Collard, who died of Aids on March 5, at least bowed out in a blaze of glory. Three days after his death, his latest debut feature *Les Nuits fauves* won the best film prize at the annual César Awards — the "French Oscars".

Collard's semi-autobiographical film, shot in a frantic glossy style, concerns a bisexual cameraman (played by the director himself) who continues his busy sex life despite being diagnosed HIV positive. *Les Nuits fauves* also won awards for the best first film, best editing and the best performance by a newcomer (Romane Bohringer). It is being lined up for British distribution later this year.

Miller springs eternal

THE programme for this year's Buxton Festival has at last been announced, following the abrupt exit of the artistic director, Jane Glover, late last year. For the first time Buxton will not be promoting its own productions, but unfetters buying them in from elsewhere. There will be a preview of Opera North's autumn staging of Cimarosa's *Il matrimonio segreto*, an opera that Buxton has done before (1981), and one that audiences on both sides of the Pennines will be able to see anyway in regular seasons later in the year. It is to be directed by Jonathan Miller.

So is the second opera, Donizetti's *Maria Stuarda*, in the production to

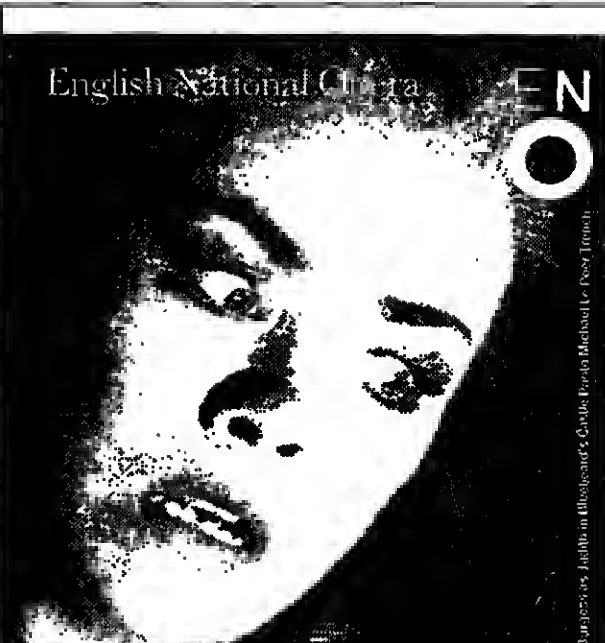
ARTS BRIEFING

be unveiled in Monte Carlo later this month. No replacement for Glover as artistic director has been announced. And there is no festival "theme", one of the more agreeable features of past seasons — unless of course it is Dr Miller.

● CINEMA admissions in January were the highest for 14 years. At 10.6 million, they were 40 per cent up on the same month last year. Mild weather, the high profile of *The Bodyguard* thanks to Whitney Houston's chart-topping recording of songs from the film, and — in the last week of January — the release of Francis Ford Coppola's *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, are probable reasons for the high figure.

Last chance...

DEFIANTLY non-politically correct, the show that Wildenstein (New Bond Street, 071-629 0602, until Friday) has put on this year to mark St Valentine's Day celebrates "Le Charme Féminin" as it was understood in 18th-century France, with a collection of elegant, frivolous and sometimes mildly naughty oil paintings and watercolours. The serious point, if any, would seem to be that political and social influence exercised in the boudoir could be just as effective as power wielded in government. But there is no need for a serious point: the prettiness of the exhibits justifies a visit.



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Spirits fail in our material world

Benedict Nightingale asks whether our reactions to the ghost of Hamlet's father, the most famous such apparition, can ever match those of our predecessors

W e critics were variously excited, moved, stimulated, impressed and irritated by Adrian Noble's Royal Shakespeare Company production of *Hamlet*, which opened in London in December and moves to Stratford on Thursday. We were not, however, all that chilled or haunted. The shiny ghost that rose from Ophelia's herb-garden, and padded about looking like the White King in a plastic chess-set, was hardly calculated to ice up the spine. Nor did Kenneth Branagh's sweet prince react to him with that mixture of terror and metaphysical awe I suspect you and I would feel if the grave suddenly yawned up a midnight visitor. A squawk of surprise, a few steps backwards, and that, pretty much, was that.

But even this was more than we have come to expect these days. Last summer Robert Shura reduced the ghost of Hamlet's father to an old tramp who bumbled across the stage as if in need of a bandage from Alan Rickman's prince, and, just as significantly, few critics seemed surprised by the bathos. Who would guess that two, three, and probably four centuries ago this encounter could claim to be the most thrilling in all Shakespeare? Much has been lost in the last 200 years, including perhaps the meaning of *Hamlet* itself.

David Garrick's scene with the ghost was the most famous in his repertoire. Men reportedly cried out, women fainted at the astonishment and terror his Hamlet displayed when he met a figure almost entirely hidden behind armour made of spookily lit steel-blue satin. And then Garrick began gaspingly to speak, not at the beginning but at the end of a breath: "Angels and ministers of grace defend us!" For one writer, George Lichtenberg, the very words made the scene "one of the greatest and most terrible that will ever be played on any stage." Partridge, the bumptious in Fielding's *Tom Jones*, "fell into so violent a trembling that his knees knocked together." He would, he said, rather follow the Devil than join Garrick on that stage.

But Garrick was only following the example of the first great post-Restoration actor, Thomas Betterton. He turned pale as his neckcloth, stood dumbfounded with horror, and, speaking in a solemn trembling voice, "made the ghost equally terrible to the spectator as to himself." And whose example was Betterton following? Well, he had been coached "in

every particle" of the role by Sir William Davenant, licensee of the Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre. Davenant had seen Joseph Taylor play Hamlet before the civil war; Taylor had taken over from Burbage as chief actor of Shakespeare's old company; and Shakespeare himself is said to have given "the top of his performance" as the ghost to Burbage's Hamlet.

There is no scene in Shakespeare with so compelling a tradition behind it. A scary ghost and a quaking Hamlet could almost be said to have the imprimatur of the Bard himself. But can you recall either of them making your flesh creep of late? No, I thought not.

True, it is no easy task. Ghosts

'Shakespeare is said to have given the top of his performance as the ghost'

inhabit the frontiers of credibility, and theatrical history is full of droll hunches. The 18th-century ghost who toppled over and helplessly rolled in his armour onto the flaming footlights. The tipsy 19th-century ghost who launched into a long, muddled altercation with the pit. The American ghost who entered while a military band played "See, the conquering hero comes". The massive ghost with the "very unusual, mincing manner and most delicate of affected voices", and the plump, overfed ghost whom Shaw accused of having come from toasting muffins on the flames of hell.

Only Courtenay Thorpe's ghost left Shaw believing he had heard what was wanted: "the spectral wail of a soul's bitter wrong crying from one world to another in the extremity of its torment." And in our time, when technology permits a million spooky effects, I can think of just one Hamlet Senior who has come close to upending the hair in the way his forebears evidently did with only trapdoors, candles and flimsy coverings to aid them. That was the ten-foot wraith that back in 1965 hovered over David Warner's Hamlet and spoke in Patrick Magee's best graveyard voice. But even he was there, less to chill and horrify, more to emphasise the

feelings of inadequacy of the son he proceeded anti-climactically to embrace.

Myself, I've watched Hamlet sit beside his son on a park bench as if cosily explaining the facts of life, and I've seen him emphasise his message by lying flat upon him; I've seen him lower his head to avoid hitting the "exit" sign as he entered the stalls. I've watched him stroll about shining an electric torch into his own face, I've been bumped by him as he scrambled through the audience pursued by RSC actors; I've several times heard him booming invisibly from the flies, the wings and, in one notorious case, from a more corporeal place still. Back in 1980, he took up residence in Jonathan Pryce's stomach, burping out his news like a dyspeptic dybbuk.

But if Hamlet needs a frightening ghost, the ghost needs a frightened Hamlet. That is one of the main lessons of the play's early history. It was the prince's fear as much as his object that gave the scene its frisson. Boswell asked Dr Johnson: "Would you start at Garrick does if you saw a ghost?" I hope not," he replied, "for if I did I would frighten the ghost." And Booth, Hamlet's father to Betterton's Hamlet, made the same point: "instead of my aving him, he terrified me."

But a great change occurred about 1780. Garrick had followed the ghost with his sword nervously pointed at it; but his successor, Kemble, trailed the weapon behind him by way of showing his trust. Reverence, pity, filial devotion became and remained Hamlet's reactions to his dead father throughout the 19th and into the 20th centuries. Macready seems to have fallen to his knees, greeting the apparition with a mixture of awe and tenderness. Salvini an overwhelming joy, Irving a respectful melancholy, while for Sarah Bernhardt, the great woman Hamlet, the ghost was "as incidental as an omelette". Even that all-electric actor, Keane, behaved "as if accustomed to hold a colloquy with such sepulchral visitors".

Now have the alarm-bells grown idly in our own day. Gielgud opted for a bearstaring pathos, Olivier for feverish exhilaration. Finney bowed respectfully, Jacoby tried to embrace his dead father, Roger Rees seemed politely surprised, Daniel Day-Lewis excited a desperate love, and Jonathan Pryce, as well he might, looked badly in need of bicarbonate of soda.



MACREADY. Why, look you there! Look how it steals away! My father, in his habit as he lived! Look, where he goes, even now, out at the portal!

As we liked it: the tragedian William Macready as Hamlet, in 1845, greeted the sight of his dead father with awe and tenderness

But does this matter? Yes, very much, for a hideous ghost and an appalled prince help explain the play's central mystery. Why does Hamlet delay his revenge? For the very reason he himself gives. The ghost may be a devil in disguise, a "goblin damned" turning him to hell. That feeling disappears if the apparition becomes an offstage voice or ambles about in a white pullover, or a dirty overcoat, or a

fascist uniform, like some recent spooks. There is, however, a second, more slippery question. In the age of A.J. Ayer and the Bishop of Durham, can we give the scene the awful plausibility it needs? All the technological trickery in the world cannot replace belief in ghosts and demons or, for that matter, in the Devil and hell. And yet did Coleridge err when he said that "Hume

himself could not but have faith in this ghost, let his anti-ghostism be as strong as Samson's? Was the great German critic, Lessing, wrong to claim that those who laugh at ghosts by day still shudder at ghost-stories by night? "Before the ghost in *Hamlet*," he added, "the hair stands on end, whether it covers a believing or a disbelieving head."

What Lessing wrote in the Age of

Reason seems equally true two centuries later. Somewhere there must be a Hamlet and a ghost capable of sending us shuddering from the theatre. How long must we await their clammy touch?

● *Hamlet* previews at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon (0789 295623) on Thursday and Friday, opening on Saturday at 12.30 (also at 6.30pm). It plays thereafter, Mon-Sat until May 1.

LONDON THEATRE: On the Fringe, a well played but negligible early piece by David Mamet and the story of a screen idol who fell from grace

Anything but a blockbuster

This dramatic doodle was tossed off by David Mamet 20 years ago and appears to have lain more or less forgotten ever since.

Let me start again. Why did anybody bother to revive *Squirrels*, the dramatic doodle that David Mamet tossed off 20 years ago? No, that's still not quite right. Is it fair to describe the play that David Mamet, the accomplished author of *American Buffalo* and *Gleengary Glen Ross*, tossed off 20 years ago as a dramatic doodle?

One more try. What did David Mamet, of whom we have come to expect so much, think he was doing when he tossed off this dramatic doodle 20 years ago?

Novelists are not the only people who have trouble with their first sentences. Critics sometimes have the same problem, especially when they are confronted with plays lacking in sense and substance. How much is there to be said of a 80-minute piece whose main character, an author called Arthur, spends most of his time onstage struggling with the opening of a

Squirrels
King's Head, Islington

book he has been trying to write for 15 years? "A man goes into the park with the intention of strangling a squirrel and does so." "The squirrel sat on the edge of a big, big root." "It was a brisk, bracing day in the park." So he continues, not until the very end of the evening managing to satisfy himself — and, I fear, almost as infrequently interesting us.

Edward Petherbridge, white grizzle stretching from his cap to his cardigan, brings a grouchy charisma to the part of the blocked author, Arthur. Steven O'Shea plays a secretary who begins by trying to get his employer's mental juices flowing, and gets progressively more fed up when his help is snubbed. And Sara Kestelman, a cleaning woman, intermittently interrupts their sessions, either to make erotic advances ("wanna make love?") or to read extracts from her own abortive creations.

These include science-fiction and Western, a romance heavily indebted to moonlight in the desert and a thriller about a spy escaping across the frozen Bering Straits to Mother Russia. Meanwhile, O'Shea quizzes Petherbridge about the symbolism of his tale ("what do squirrels represent?") and Petherbridge lets slips the odd apophthegm ("If you never hear another thing in your life, remember this: art is art") while stealing his amanuensis's sandwiches. I chuckled at the earnest pretension, as Mamet presumably wanted me to; but not much, not often.

The actors are expert. Aaron Muller's production perfectly serviceable. "The problem is the play. Towards the end, Mamet seems to suggest that writers can learn from their blockages; but it is hard to take him very seriously. How can we do so when before then he has had little that is not facetious to say about either the creative process or the forces stifling it?

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE



Author and secretary: Edward Petherbridge, Steven O'Shea

His face fitted, his preferences did not

He was one of the biggest stars in the late 1920s, but even the name of William Haines is scarcely known today. His films are still kept in studio vaults, denied even the occasional television outing, or any other sort. At the height of his Hollywood career he was decreed a non-person, and so he remained, for the movie moguls at least, for the remaining 40-odd years of his life. Claudio Macor's play recounts the rise, fall and eventual equilibrium of the actor who took the title of one of his hits, *Tell It To The Marines*, rather too literally. When the vice squad surprised him in a YMCA room with a sailor, the public finally shared what had been common knowledge throughout the film colony. Billy Haines was — in the words of the (fortunately) inimitable studio boss L.B. Mayer — "a pansy".

The story is narrated in flashback by Billy's boyfriend, Jimmy Shields. A casual pick-up in New York in 1922 led to a 50-year relationship. Shields followed Haines to California after Billy's victory in a talent competition led to high pressure, manufactured stardom. Stand-in, scene painter and finally interior designer, Jimmy stayed with Haines despite the star's promiscuity, through success and failure. He killed himself in 1974, a year after Billy's death.

Macor's writing has uneasy moments. When Jimmy confesses, of their first meeting, that "I desperately wanted to be a lump of sugar melting in the bottom of a hot cup of coffee", there are echoes of the romantic comedies once graced by Evelyn Laye. When he complains in Hollywood, "I feel like a convict in a gilded prison," the clichés of a Joan Crawford vehicle, say, are not unsuitably evoked.

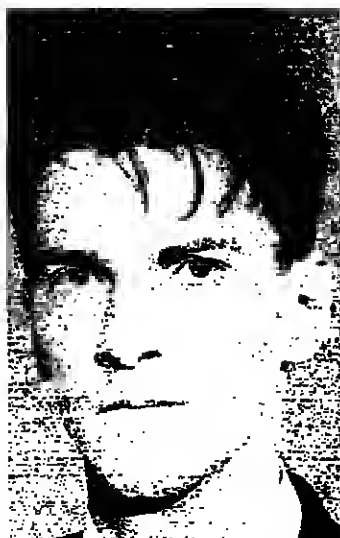
The play is at its best documenting the facts: the preposterous, publicity-engineered courtship between Haines and Pola Negri (here portrayed like the Gloria Swanson figure in *Sunset Boulevard*), the hideous beating the men were subjected to by the Ku Klux Klan, the all-pervasive studio dictatorships run by appalling philistines who managed to create the century's one popular art form (the jury is still out on pop music). Warmth and humour are provided by figures like Marion

The Tailor-Made Man
BAC, Battersea

Davies and Carole Lombard, here convincingly seen as funny, salty-tongued, earthy and staunchly loyal in friendship. (They even offer a rude interpretation of what William Randolph Hearst, alias Citizen Kane, meant by Rosebud.) Friendship, as much as love, loyalty no less than eros, are the play's true themes. Stars like Lombard and Crawford helped make Haines into a successful interior decorator after his disgrace. Ironically, his last important commission was in the bosom of the establishment: the American ambassador's residence in Regent's Park in 1969. He had refused Billy Wilder's invitation to appear with the old timers, including Buster Keaton, in *Sunset Boulevard*.

On Michael Fleischer's set with its walls of movable panels, Macor's direction of his play is aptly straightforward. Simon Tweed and John Gilmour co-vince in both frivolity and grief. Neil MacLeod suggests the monster that was L.B. Mayer, and Susan Shields as Lombard depicts the blonde ebullience that attracted Clark Gable and repelled Charles Laughton — now there's another play waiting to be written.

MARTIN HOYLE



Nonconformist: Simon Tweed as screen idol William Haines

OPERA IN SWEDEN: Rodney Milnes sees a British composer premiere his first full-length work a long way from home

Welcomes are warmer on the Arctic Circle

The fact that an important new opera by a British composer — Ian McQueen's *Fortunato* — should have been given its premiere in Sweden is both something of a mystery and a not-so-silent reproach to the way that contemporary opera and its funding are approached here. Norrlands Opera, the northernmost repertory opera company in the world, is based in Umeå, a snowball's throw from the Arctic Circle. It is roughly the equivalent of Opera North, and its director, Per-Erik Öhrn, has access through his previous connection with the Vadstena Summer Academy to the cream of young Swedish singers, than whom there are few creamier.

He also has a nose for British production teams who are prepared to work seriously and hard no Norrlands Opera production reaches its first night with less than six weeks' stage rehearsal, and *Fortunato* had eight; among those who work there are Clare Venables, David Parry and Matthew Richardson.

Öhrn also has an ear for British composers. The 38-year-old McQueen's one-act *Line of Terror*, a *Judith and Holofernes* opera, was premiered at Vadstena in 1987, and Öhrn promptly commissioned the full-length *Fortunato*. The ENO Opera Studio tried to perform *Line of Terror* in last year's Almeida season, but could not find the money. *Fortunato* was premiered in Umeå last week and will be given 21 performances, for which 80 per cent of the seats were sold before the first night. Oh dear...

I say "important" because McQueen's is an individual and compelling voice, eclectic in the very best sense. The influence of Britten is plain to bear and so, in some angular vocal intervals, is that of his teacher Maxwell Davies. From another mentor, Per Norgård, comes a vein of peculiarly Baltic lyricism, and there is a love duet without voices to which Bernstein would not have been ashamed

Fortunato
Norrlands Opera

to put his name. There is also a healthy eclecticism in much of *Fortunato* that has been absent from British opera since Walton. Plainsong, jazz and 18th-century pastiche play their part. Above all, the musical thought-processes are always apparent: this is "useful" music in the sense that Britten wanted his to be.

Vanda Monica-Westertstahl's libretto is based on various literary sources from the 17th century, and takes the form of a picaresque *Bildungsroman*. The eponymous hero leaves home, like Peer Gynt, and falls in with two low-life characters, the trickster Voland and his moll Mariella. *Fortunato* becomes in turn a beggar, a Swedish Count's hit-man, victim of the Potiphar's-wife-style Countess, and an actor. At each stage he and his companions fall foul of Thomas, the Count's puritanical counsellor — an archetypal Swedish character. When Voland is hanged, *Fortunato* has an Ibsenian encounter with a

Woman on a Mountain before rejecting her and continuing on his journey.

Fortunato is not perfect — what first full-length opera is? Some nips and tucks could with advantage be made in each of the three long acts, and the piece does not quite end. But of McQueen's skill in writing rewardingly for both voice and orchestra, and his overall command of operatic form, there can be no doubt.

The premiere production, devotedly conducted by Gary Berkson and directed with flair by Matthew Richardson, was notable for three stunning performances. The title role was written for the prodigiously gifted counter-tenor Mikael Bellini, as expressive an actor as he is a singer, and the mezzo Carina Strandberg had vocal and physical allure in plenty as Mariella. The baritone Peter Mazzi paraded her in an extraordinarily unbuttoned performance as Voland. Seldom can so much intimacy have been portrayed on stage with such lack of inhibition or offence.



Peter Mattei as Voland: an unbuttoned performance

Julin seeks change in starting process

FROM DAVID POWELL, ATHLETICS CORRESPONDENT IN TORONTO

TWO years ago, in the fastest and most fiercely competitive 100 metres there has been, Linford Christie was squeezed out of the medals at the world championships in Tokyo because the starter did not apply a specific guideline in the international rulebook governing reaction time to the gun. Now, Colin Jackson, Christie's friend and British team-mate, has suffered at the hands of a starter shooting himself in the foot.

In the 60 metres hurdles final at the world indoor championships here on Sunday, Jackson took the silver medal. The gold went to Mark McKoy, the Canadian with whom he trains. But McKoy made a false start, as Dennis Mitchell had done in Tokyo.

Mitchell's "flyer" was sufficiently marked as to have made the difference between him finishing third and fourth. He completed a clean sweep of medals for the United States behind Carl Lewis and Leroy Burrell, leaving Christie fourth.

Mitchell's reaction time was 0.090sec. McKoy's 0.053sec. The rulebook indicates that a reaction time quicker than 0.100sec should not be permitted, the theory being that anything quicker is anticipation of the gun rather than reaction to it.

As McKoy had already made one false start, he should have been disqualified. Even McKoy, one of Toronto's own, admitted as much. "If it had not been Toronto, I would have been watching from the sidelines," he said.

Ron Bell, the Canadian starter, defended his decision to let the race run and, according to the rules, the starter "shall be the sole judge of any fact connected with the start." He said: "I have done about 25,000 starts in my career and McKoy is as good a starter as I have ever seen."

Bell is 58 which, in Sweden, would put him out of a job. "We have an upper age limit of 55 after which you are not

allowed to start at top-level meetings because your sharpness diminishes," Lemnart Julin, who trains Swedish starters, said.

On Julin's recommendation, the Swedish federation has written to the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) seeking a rule improvement to clear up an apparent contradiction. While 162 (10) permits a reaction time of 0.100sec or slower, rule 162 (6) suggests that a false start is determined by the report of the gun, not by reaction time, and that any start after the gun is legal.

In which case, McKoy did not false start, although the more specific nature of 162 (10) says that he did. "We want to make the two paragraphs correspond so that you do not accept, in any circumstances, a reaction time lower than 0.100sec," Julin said.

Julin believes that a great many races break here because athletes are supposed to be steady in the set position but, usually, are not. In the women's 100 metres final in Tokyo, Gwen Torrence twice edged, disturbing Melene Olney in an adjacent lane. When the gun went, Olney was rocking backwards, got a dreadful start and finished third.

"At the championships here, probably no more than five starts were correct," Julin said. "Under the present system, the athletes can make the start one continuous movement, but it should be divided into three parts. The essential thing is the steady set part. By applying the longer set time, the movement cannot be continuous." In other words, athletes would not seek to cheat by starting before the gun sounds.

Starters are assisted by headphones that register an acoustic signal if a reaction time is faster than 0.100sec. Bell said that it had been set off by an athlete not still in the set position and therefore he could not use it to judge McKoy.



Cast of one: this solitary fly-fisherman is at peace with the world as he settles to his day's sport in the idyllic setting of a fast-flowing stream

Cold water start for the sport of high summer

Brian Clarke marks today's opening of the fly-fishing season with an optimistic preview of prospects for the months ahead

A friend of mine, a great humorist as well as a great angler, had braved the early March weather with a group of others. Like them he was cocooned and swaddled. An Arctic wind whipped tears from his eyes. Ice crinkled across the lake. The first flecks of snow were searing down the air. It was bone-chilling cold.

My friend stirred. He blew on his numb, red fingers, drew his fishing coat more tightly around him and pulled down his hat. Then he settled again, concentrating. "By crickey," he said in a soft, fervent voice, "I'll be glad when I've had enough of this."

That remark, though made when he was after pike, captures deliciously the ambivalence of fishing for trout so early in the year. All senses cry out that fly-fishing is a sport of high summer, when the air is hazy with blue and the trout dangle in the setting sun. And yet so often when March 16 is reached,

fly-fishers are reaching for their woolies, and topping up on fortified. After six months of peering down winter's tunnel, the first few days of the new season have proved too long and too much to be resisted.

Today, of course, after a week of sun, tens of thousands of trout fishermen are going to find more right than wrong, but few will find the fishing easy. The water will still be too cold to stimulate much fly-life and the fish themselves will not be ready to hunt. A few rods will bend, a few fish will jump, a few nets will bow and drip; but not so many.

Because of this, most anglers will wait until April, a few even until May, before starting. By then the water will be alive with food and the fish will be fat and in fettle. By May, the season will be seriously under way.

But late disasters, the outlook is excellent. If the fishing prospects in the short term are no better than par for the

time of year, the omens for the longer term are better than for many seasons past. The rain that we have had since the autumn has done wondrous things.

The notion that rain is always good for fishing is an old wives' tale. The effect of rain on fishing depends entirely on the circumstances in which it falls — and the quantities. If it falls in the wrong amounts in the wrong places at the wrong times of year, the effects of rain on sport can vary from the negligible to the disastrous.

But over the last winter, nature has got everything right. Rain has fallen in sensible amounts, on watersheds that were cranking dry, at the time of year when there was little in the way of plant life to soak it up and no heat

to cause it to evaporate. The rivers that take their water in direct run-off from the land are already brimming; the rivers that rely on underground springs are already assured of enough stored-up supplies to see them well into summer.

It is these latter rivers — especially the most famous trout rivers of all, the southern chalk streams — that will see the most interesting changes. They will be spared the worst that any heat might do over the summer, and the dread levels of blanket weed that have all but killed sport in recent years are unlikely to recur.

Blanket weed thrives in silted waters that are rich in nutrients, when temperatures are high and the water

is clear. It thrived during the drought years and in turn suffocated beneficial plants like ramunculus, which are home to insects on which trout was fat.

The higher flows expected for the coming summer will increase depth and velocity, reduce light penetration, help carry away silt and dilute nutrients. Ramunculus, which was all but wiped out on some reaches in 1989, will make some kind of comeback; and with it, fly-life will improve.

Lake anglers will benefit, too. As water tables rise, so the levels of lakes and ponds rise with them. The result will be some deeper, cooler water in which the fish can seek comfort if the weather again turns hot. Where springs well up from a lake bed, the result will be lower temperatures, still, increased oxygenation and, more, active fish. Fly-fishers who know where such spots are will make a killing.

Anglers who fish the big reservoirs like Rutland Water

and Grafton will be blessed with a particular advantage. These lakes have been full, or close to full, for several months and the once dried-out and barren margins have now been flooded long enough for weed and fly-life to repopulate large tracts of them. The result, with hundreds of more acres of shallows to fish and enough food and cover to bring the trout close in, could be bank fishing of a quality perhaps not seen for a decade.

That said, there are few absolutes or certainties in angling. Those confined to the rain-fed rivers could still suffer if the summer rains fail, and anyone confined to a shallow lake could yet have a bad time if the sun burns as it did in 1989 and 1990. Those who fish chalk streams, though, have an excellent year in prospect. They are unlikely to feel they have had enough at any time, whatever the weather might bring.

Drought threat, page 7

FOR THE RECORD

BASKETBALL			
CARLEBERG NATIONAL LEAGUE: More First Division: Haverhill Hawks 129, Portland Sea Dogs 100 (1st 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 25th, 26th, 27th, 28th, 29th, 30th, 31st, 32nd, 33rd, 34th, 35th, 36th, 37th, 38th, 39th, 40th, 41st, 42nd, 43rd, 44th, 45th, 46th, 47th, 48th, 49th, 50th, 51st, 52nd, 53rd, 54th, 55th, 56th, 57th, 58th, 59th, 60th, 61st, 62nd, 63rd, 64th, 65th, 66th, 67th, 68th, 69th, 70th, 71st, 72nd, 73rd, 74th, 75th, 76th, 77th, 78th, 79th, 80th, 81st, 82nd, 83rd, 84th, 85th, 86th, 87th, 88th, 89th, 90th, 91st, 92nd, 93rd, 94th, 95th, 96th, 97th, 98th, 99th, 100th, 101st, 102nd, 103rd, 104th, 105th, 106th, 107th, 108th, 109th, 110th, 111th, 112th, 113th, 114th, 115th, 116th, 117th, 118th, 119th, 120th, 121st, 122nd, 123rd, 124th, 125th, 126th, 127th, 128th, 129th, 130th, 131st, 132nd, 133rd, 134th, 135th, 136th, 137th, 138th, 139th, 140th, 141st, 142nd, 143rd, 144th, 145th, 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1378th, 13			

ATHLETICS 40

SWEDES CALL FOR
CLARIFICATION OF
STARTING PROCEDURE

SPORT

TUESDAY MARCH 16 1993

RACING 41

VINTAGE CROP
FANCIED FOR
CHAMPION HURDLE

Fletcher baffled as Tufnell and Emburey come off second best

Lewis fights to keep England in contention

FROM PETER BALL IN COLOMBO

SRI LANKA ended the third day of the Test match here yesterday on 408 for eight, 28 ahead with two first-innings wickets in hand. By the standards of their Indian tour, England had a good day.

It was a day of fluctuating fortunes. Sri Lanka established early command, Huthurusinghe, Aravinda de Silva and Ranatunga scoring freely before England, with Lewis the spearhead, mounted an impressive counter-attack with the new ball.

Sri Lanka's subsequent collapse was neither as precipitous nor as final as England's had been. Rather than five wickets going down for 22, five went down for 46 as Sri Lanka declined from 329 for three to 376 for eight.

In high humidity, the recovery spoke volumes for the fitness and determination of the England bowlers. Lewis's figures of three for 53 in 24 overs hardly did justice to his efforts. His stamina in a spell after tea, when he took two for nine in seven overs, was as impressive as his pace and hostility, and both Jarvis and Malcolm played their part.

They were well supported by some excellent out-crickets. Stewart had an outstanding day behind the stumps with three catches, two of them spectacular, and a smart stumping. His captaincy was not affected. He thrived on being in the thick of the action.

England's spinners, however, continued to toil for little reward on a pitch on which the two Sri Lanka off spinners

had found every assistance. Tufnell had a tidy spell in the morning, only de Silva and Ranatunga getting after him, but neither he nor Emburey found consistent turn.

"I can't explain why their spinners turned it and ours didn't," Keith Fletcher, the England team manager, said. "It looked like two totally different pitches. At least in Bombay and Madras our spinners turned it as well today they haven't. Their bowlers must spin it more."

That provides the main worry for England when they resume tomorrow after today's rest day. Providing Tillekeratne's efforts at shielding Muralitharan are not extended too long, the lead should be negligible. With Sri Lanka batting last, England should be slight favourites, but if the pitch begins to wear seriously, Sri Lanka are the better equipped to exploit it, and to survive on it.

Lewis made an early breakthrough yesterday, Stewart diving low to his right to scoop up a stunning catch in front of first slip as Huthurusinghe sparred outside off stump. Tufnell claimed England's only other success before lunch, Stewart whipping off the balls as Gurusinha aimed several miles over mid-wicket and lunged forward as he uncoiled.

That brought in Ranatunga to join de Silva in their stand of 127 in 34 overs. The pair punished the two spinners with lusty blows. De Silva lifted Emburey over the fence

at mid-wicket for one six and Tufnell straight for another, but soon Ranatunga was matching him blow for blow.

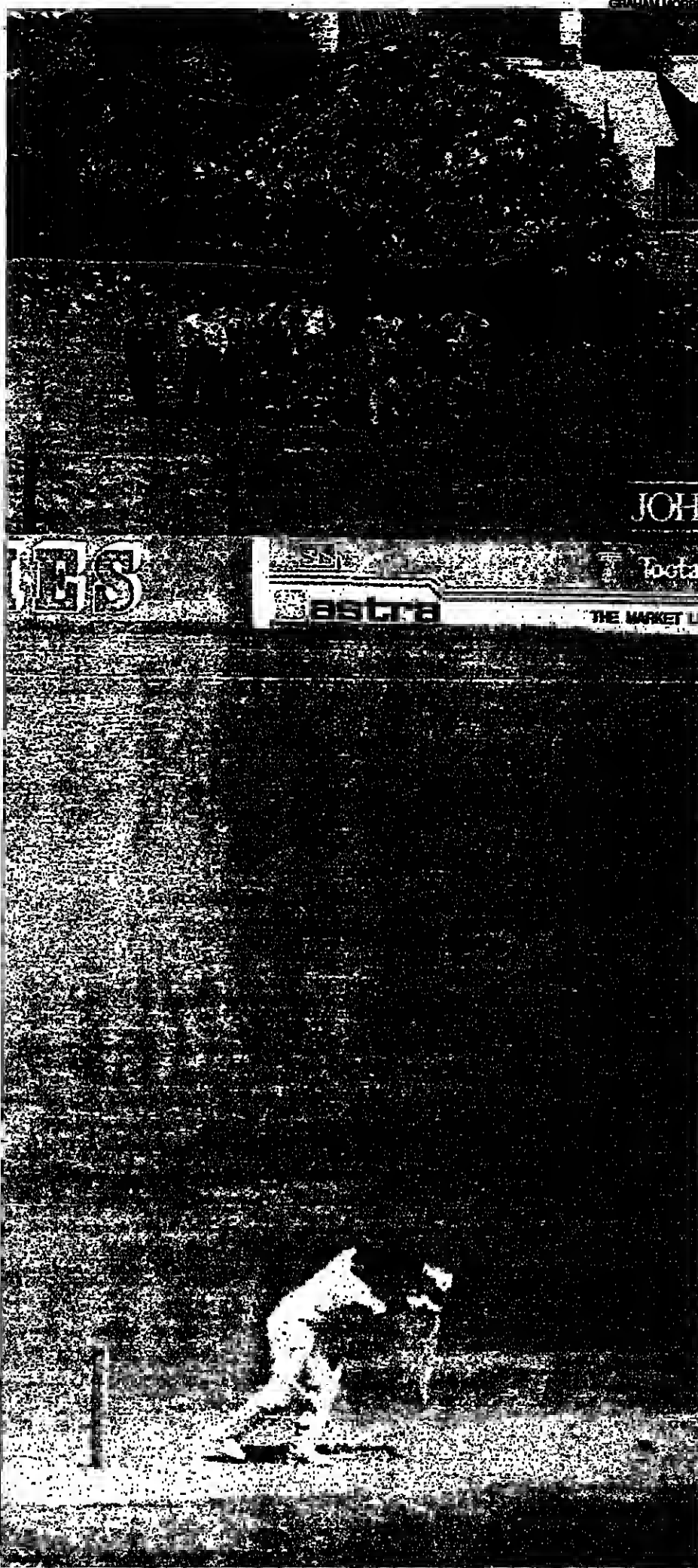
With its clusters of people sitting under the trees, its lawns and swimming pool, the Sinhalese Sports Club could be mistaken for an England country-house ground, and that picture was complete as a band arrived to play in a neighbouring field in mid-afternoon.

As Ranatunga lifted Tufnell over mid-wicket for a six on his way to reaching 50 off only 79 balls, the band struck up that old naval favourite, *Blaze Away*. The new ball arrived immediately, however, and it was the England seam bowlers who responded to the injunction.

Malcolm might have made the first strike but Stewart dropped de Silva going down the leg side. The batsman fell to Jarvis in the next over, Stewart this time holding on to a more difficult leg-side chance.

Sri Lanka were 330 for four at tea, but after the interval Lewis charged in purposefully. Stewart held his third catch to end Ranatunga's stay and Atherton took a brilliant one-handed diving catch at backward gully off a full-blooded out to remove the dangerous Jayasuriya. Tillekeratne, however, controlled the strike well enough to become the fifth batsman to pass 50 in the innings.

N Zealand in control, page 42
Kambli falls short, page 42



Line of vision: a cluster of spectators enjoy a clear view of play yesterday

COLOMBO SCOREBOARD

England won toss

First innings: 380 (R.A. Smith 128, G.A. Hick 88, A.J. Stewart 63; K.P.J. Warne 4 for 90, M. Muralitharan 4 for 118).

SRI LANKA: First innings

	Rs	40	Min	Ball
R.S. Mahanama c Smith b Emburey	64	0	110	63
M. Muralitharan b Lewis	59	0	8	135
A.P. Gurusinha c Stewart b Tufnell	43	0	5	188
U.G. Huthurusinghe c Stewart b Lewis	60	2	6	205
P.A. de Silva c Stewart b Lewis	80	1	6	167
A. Ranatunga c Stewart b Lewis	64	1	6	167
H.P. Tillekeratne not out	51	0	8	168
S.T. Jayasuriya c Atherton b Lewis	4	0	1	15
S. Jayasinghe c Atherton b Lewis	9	0	1	46
C.P.H. Ranatunga c Lewis b Jarvis	1	0	0	13

M Muralitharan not out 7 0 0 46 24

Extras (D 2, LB 12, W 1, NB 11) 28

Total (8 wickets, 662 min, 130 overs) 408

K.P.J. Warne bowled to bat

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-99 (Huthurusinghe 28), 2-153 (Gurusinha 19), 3-203 (P.A. de Silva 28), 4-330 (Ranathunga 61), 5-338 (Tillekeratne 51), 6-349 (Tillekeratne 12), 7-371 (Tillekeratne 23), 8-376 (Tillekeratne 27).

BOWLING: Malcolm 19-4-45-0 (nb 1) (5-3-0, 2-0-7, 10-2-26, 2-1-3-0), Jarvis 22-1-88-2 (nb 4, w 1) (6-0-28-0, 5-0-13-0, 4-0-16-1, 1-0-2-0, 6-1-11-0), Lewis 24-4-43-3 (nb 2) (5-0-18-0, 1-0-1-1, 3-0-4-0, 7-3-9-2, 3-0-4-0), Tufnell 30-4-106-1 (nb 7) (10-4-49-0, 3-1-7-0, 17-3-56-1), Emburey 27-4-65-2 (nb 1) (7-1-22-1, 11-3-58-0, 2-1-5-0, 6-0-25-1, 1-0-5-0), Hick 8-0-27-0 (1-0-1-0, 7-0-26-0).

INTERMEDIATE SCORES: Second day: Test: 90 (Maharaja 8, Huthurusinghe 6) in 8 overs, 50: 68 min, 14.5 ov. 100: 107 min, 22.5 ov. Class: 140-1 (Huthurusinghe 53, Gurusinha 12) in 40 ov. Third day: 150: 188 min, 46 ov. 200: 258 min, 62.1 ov. Lunch: 218-3 (P.A. de Silva 28, Ranathunga 11) in 70 ov. 250: 319 min, 78.4 ov. New ball: 287-3 (50 ov, 200: 353 min, 80.2 ov. Test: 330-4 (Ranathunga 61, Tillekeratne 6) in 98 ov. 350: 454 min, 107.2 ov. 400: 548 min, 127.1 ov.

Umpires: K.T. Francis and T.M. Samarasinghe.

Guscott's escape exposes refereeing blind spot

By DAVID HANDS
RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

IT WAS a bad weekend for English rugby: a fatality after an incident in the league match between Hendon and Centaurs, two first division sides, and a severe reprimand for three Harlequins, two of them England players, for wearing illegal studs. Yet a third international was seen on television to get away with an offence that might have resulted in his own sending off.

Jeremy Guscott is fortunate to be proceeding towards the climax of the five nations' championship in Dublin this weekend. The Bath and England centre was clearly responsible for the indignant explosion that led to Fran Clough, his opposite number, being sent off in the

Courage championship match against Wasps. That he stepped on Clough's chest with his usual elegance, rather than a malevolent stamping, is neither here nor there.

Whether it cost Wasps the match and possibly the league title is open to debate but it did not help them. David Matthews, the referee, has been much criticised but he could rule only on what he saw. The surprise was that the touch judge, David Thomas, missed Guscott's action which, given the general warning already issued to all players, would surely have meant his expulsion and a likely 60-day ban.

It would also have cost Guscott his international place and, conceivably, a British Isles tour. There is still the possibility that he may be cited by his own union under the

new procedure introduced this season and, by coincidence, there is a meeting of the Somerset disciplinary committee tonight.

Given the clarity of the televised recording of the incident, there seems every chance of Wasps pressing a speedy and successful case that Clough has been punished enough and that a 30-day suspension is not applicable. If the authorities consider otherwise, Clough will miss the next two league matches and the Pilkington Cup semi-final with Harlequins.

In such circumstances, you would think the best referees would be employed at the most significant games. Yet one of England's international panel was on duty in the second division and Fred Howard, who many still regard as the

country's leading referee, was nowhere to be seen in the top flight. Since he was dropped from the panel in December, he has had only three leading games.

Players dropped from the national team can go back to their clubs and restate their case in the highest arena the domestic game affords. Not so referees, who take matches the authorities award them on a two-monthly rota.

It is a criminal waste of talent and it will be even more wasteful should Howard, who is still bitter about his treatment, retire from refereeing at the end of this season. It is only three years since another international panel referee, Ian Butlerwell, did the same after losing his place on the panel and it does not augur well for the game that

men still young in refereeing terms should be lost so early.

The system that allows the best referees, having had their chance before Christmas to stake a claim for international honours, to take a back seat in the second half of the season, when critical promotion and relegation issues are on the line, demands a review. It will be enforced, anyway, next season when home and away league matches become the norm and there will be more matches.

In the dog-eat-dog days at the end of this season, when relegation threatens so many, there will be more tense meetings requiring the presence of the best officials. Howard is still one of them.

Player dies, page 3

CONCISE CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- Food craving (6)
- Lure (6)
- Jump (4)
- Sufficient (8)
- Upper Egypt capital (6)
- Passing picnic (4)
- Terrified (6,2,5)
- Dressed (4)
- Hang freely (6)
- Responsive (8)
- Exhale (4)
- Dozy (6)
- Time to come (6)

DOWN

- Professionally unscrupulous (9)
- Breach (3)
- Emotional composition (8)
- Ship's team (4)
- Crudely cut (5-4)
- Unfashionable (3)
- Hoedown party (4,5)
- Decisive moment (5,4)
- Gilding sheet (4,4)
- Capably (4)
- Inch thousandth (3)
- Piece (3)

SOLUTIONS TO NO 3046

ACROSS: 1 Lardaceous 8 Nomad 9 Lusily 10 Ere 11 Slaid 12 Galileo 14 Floppy 16 Breton 20 Eulogia 23 Pooch 24 Mir 25 Ingenue 26 Expel 27 Grasp at a straw
DOWN: 1 Long-suffering 2 Cembalo 3 Added up 4 Allege 5 Sissal 6 Chill 7 Lay down the law 13 Ire 15 Pro 17 Repress 18 Trooper 19 Latent 21 Logia 22 Gen up

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By Raymond Keese, Chess Correspondent

This position is from the game Landenbergue v. Roder, Bern 1993. The players are barely out of the opening and yet white's next move forced black's resignation. The key to white's killer blow is in the constricted state of the black king.

Solution on page 40.

By PHILIP HOWARD

BELCHER
a. A cross-bred greyhound
b. A neckerchief
c. Successor to Stephenson's Rocket

BALBRIGGAN
a. A knitted cotton fabric
b. A border raid
c. A fairy bridge

MERRIMAC

a. A clown
b. A Hogmanay first-footer
c. An Ironclad

DOCTOR SLAMMER
a. A would-be duellist
b. A prison governor
c. A bare-knuckle prize-fighter

Answers on page 40

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Address: _____

Postcode: _____
Age Range: 18-35 ☐ 36-50 ☐ 51-75 ☐ 76+ ☐
IMPORTANT: Please sign below that you are a smoker aged 18 or over.

☐ Please tick if you do not wish to receive details of further offers.

Brand smoked most often:

Flake ☐ Ready Rubbed ☐

Amount smoked per week:

Less than 30g ☐ 30g - 60g ☐ 60g - 90g ☐ Over 90g ☐

Make of last pipe bought:

Please specify: _____

Post to: Pipe Smoking Survey, FREEPOST EDO 3609, London E15 2BR.

BPA 054

Only one application per person. Offer subject to availability of 25g pouches and only open to UK resident smokers aged 18 or over. Employees and their families of tobacco manufacturers, retailers or their agents may not apply. Issued by Imperial Tobacco Ltd.